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LECTURES  
ON  
THE BHAGAVAD GITA

WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE GITA

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PUBLISHED BY  
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PRINTED AT  
THE MADRAS LAW JOURNAL PRESS,  
MYLAPORE, MADRAS.

## THE PUBLISHER'S NOTE

At the request of the Hindu Samaj, Rajahmundry, Mr. D. S. Sarma, M.A., Principal of the Government Arts College, Rajahmundry, kindly delivered in 1935 and 1936 a course of six lectures on the Bhagavad Gita. We are grateful to him for giving us permission to publish these lectures and along with them to reprint his English translation of the Gita. We need hardly say that the Gita is rightly termed the Gospel of Humanity and the best guide to conduct, showing the way to peace and happiness in this life and hereafter, and that, therefore, it is the duty of every one to study it and be profited by its teachings.

Our thanks are due to Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics, Oxford University, for kindly writing the Foreword and to the editor of the "Kalyana Kalpataru" for giving us permission to reprint the views on the Gita of Mahatma Gandhi, Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

1—2—1937 }  
RAJAHMUNDRY. }

N. SUBBA RAU,  
PRESIDENT,  
THE HINDU SAMAJ.



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## FOREWORD

BY

SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN

My friend, Professor D. S. Sarma, who is already well known as a serious-minded and scholarly expositor of the Bhagavad Gita, has again put us under obligation to him by his excellent "Lectures on the Gita."

There are many to-day who think that religion is not necessary, except for those who happen to relish it. If we are kind and tolerant, good-tempered and unselfish, that is enough. Love and brotherhood are the highest religion. But morality requires a stronger basis than mere sentiment. Mere amiability and goodwill cannot save the individual or the world. The Bhagavad Gita affirms that religion is essential and it alone can make human life sweet and pure.

There are different ways in which the book can be approached. It may be used as a Sanskrit text for literary, historical or antiquarian research. For the Hindu, however, it is a

guide to the art of living, a Yoga-Sastra, providing him with the source and standard of all action.

The two tests of the value of any religious Scripture are whether it helps man to find himself and attain peace, and whether it contributes to social harmony. It seems to me that the religion of the Gita satisfies these two tests, the spiritual and the social.

(1) Any religion which demands from its adherents unthinking faith has no chance with the scientifically trained men of our generation. A full life is also a rational one. The Gita adopts an attitude of scientific realism or submission to fact. We might dispute doctrines, but cannot deny facts. The Gita takes its stand on the reality of spiritual experience, of which God is the factual content, even as the physical world is the factual content of sense-knowledge. It is possible for the individual to become directly aware of the presence of the Divine.

The God of the Gita is not a remote, transcendental mystery, but the lord and giver of life, entering into the world of events and persons, operating at various levels, but most freely in the world of souls. He helps the world to move up at every plane, in every person and at every point, to reach towards

greater perfection, to get into conformity with the purpose of the world. He is not only our deepest reality, but our friend and guide, inspiring and moulding every detail of our life, if we so desire. He does not want to do anything against our will. He demands our co-operation. The flute of Krishna is a symbol for the voice of the Unutterable, which may not speak in words, and which yet attracts human hearts. God woos our soul entreating, though He might have commanded—“*Yathechhasi tat̥ha kuru.*” (=Do as you please).

By free will we have to re-integrate our nature, reconcile reason and will, the flesh and the affections, with the spirit in us. In our ordinary life we are divided within ourselves. Our unrest is a reflection of our inner division. The battle has to be fought in the hearts of men, who are inclined to be lost in the pursuit of material ends and live on the surface of life, thinking that we belong there and must remain there. We are like pieces of wood drifting down a stream, never dipping much below the surface, except when a wave splashes over us. In these exceptional occasions, we feel that there is something more in us than is apparent in our ordinary consciousness, a finer spiritual presence. It is the task of man to recognise this presence lying hidden behind the mask of



his self-conscious personality. To find that deeper being, to function consciously in the world of truth in which it dwells, to let it inspire our daily life and transfigure our personality, is the purpose of human living.

(2) Philosophers are often criticised as unpractical. They are said to dwell apart in serene temples of abstract thought, to know little and care less about what happens to men and women in the world. As long as they can define the Absolute, they do not mind what happens to the Relative. There may have been philosophers here and there, of whom this was not wholly untrue, but it is not a fair comment on the author of the Bhagavad Gita, who is essentially practical and prophetic. He remembers, at every point, that men have to live in the world, that they have passions, tragedy, happiness in life and that their religion must bear on life and history. The Gita opens with a problem of life, the crisis in Arjuna's mind. Arjuna sees friends and relations in the two armies, his limbs tremble, his purpose weakens, and he appeals to Krishna for advice. Krishna asks him to do his duty in the station in which he finds himself, and contribute to the welfare of the world—'Lokasangraha.' The rationalist Voltaire agrees with this injunc-

tion when he asks us to cultivate our little garden. We are called upon to do our duty in the circumstances in which we happen to be placed, to contribute our share of positive, creative activity, our effort with a direct social purpose. It is our duty to better the environment in which we are destined to spend our brief and perilous years, under the shadow of fear and misfortune, wickedness and stupidity.

The truly religious men will have little sympathy with those who mistake religion for ritualism and assume that the existing social institutions are ordained by God. The revolt against religion is motivated, the world over, by its failure to deliver us from the utter futility and misery of the world in which we live, from a social system which is so indifferent to the suffering it produces. If the custodians of religion with their cast-iron conservatism regard the present order with its inequality, as ordained by religion, no wonder the critics complain about the futility of religion. Those religious men, who, stiff with spiritual pride, quote scriptures in defence of the inequalities of caste and the horror of untouchability, show themselves to be woefully lacking in the spirit of religion. A life of religion does not consist either in a rigid conformity to rules or a strict

imitation of past models, but in the practice of goodness which takes various forms in view of changing circumstances. It is constituted by acts of love, not articles of faith. Its attitudes to moral problems are fresh and natural, not unctuous and fixed up. It will burn with a passion to liberate man from the brutal burden, the living agony which age-old superstition has foisted on him.

It is the duty of man to raise himself to this higher plane. This great book gives directions even to the weakest; its doors are wide open, and its pages soiled by the fingers of the poor and the miserable. Different ways are indicated to serve varied tastes. Mere scholarship is not enough. There are great scholars whose close knowledge of the text does not mean a vital appreciation of the spirit. We must remake ourselves by giving up our selfishness. St. John of the Cross says: "The soul must be emptied from all that its own powers are capable of . . . . It must be in darkness like a blind man. Who shall hinder God doing His own will in a soul that is resigned, detached, and self-annihilated?"\* When we are well stripped, well lost, we gain ourselves, and all is ours.

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\*The Ascent of Mount Carmel.

Professor Sarma has felt the truth of what he says in his pulses, and I commend this book to our young students for whom it is mainly intended.

I can only repeat, in conclusion, the advice which he has given them. Set aside a few minutes every day for prayer and meditation. Take up a verse or two of the Gita, read slowly, let each word sink into your consciousness, let its meaning pass into your mind, let its lesson literally engrave itself on your thoughts. If you start the day's work with such a feeling, you will not forget that you live here for a purpose larger than you see.

*September, 1936.*  
*London.*

S. RADHAKRISHNAN.



# I

## HOW TO READ THE GITA

My aim in this series of talks on the Gita is to stimulate interest in that great scripture and induce our young men, especially students, to make it the staff of their lives early in their career. As my aim is thus a very practical one, I do not like to be drawn into any controversy regarding the interpretation of this or that passage. I have not got the qualifications necessary for taking part in theological discussions. I am not a great Sanskrit scholar and I have not made any systematic study of the various schools of Hindu Philosophy. As all of you know, my subject is English language and Literature. My only qualification for undertaking to speak on the Gita is that I intensely love that scripture which has transformed my life. I want that others also should derive the same benefit from reading it as I have done.

There are various ways of reading the Gita. There is first of all the ritualistic way of read-

ing it as part of daily ceremonial. How mechanical this sometimes becomes will be seen when we remember that many of the readers of this class do not know Sanskrit and look upon the verses as sacred *mantras* which purify men by their very utterance, whether the meaning is understood or not. Well, it is not in this way that I want our young men to read the Gita.

Secondly, there is the theologian's way of reading it as a sectarian gospel. Every professed student of Hindu theology is expected to read the *Prasthanatraya*—the *Upanishads*, the *Brahma Sutras* and the *Bhagavad Gita*—with the commentaries of the Acharya of his particular sect. The Gita is thus made part of a theological course, and the aim of the student is to understand how the scripture lends support to the philosophical system of a particular teacher. I do not say that this way of studying the Gita is entirely wrong, or profitless. But that is not the way suitable for a young man who wants to make the scripture his spiritual guide.

Thirdly, there is the European scholar's way of reading the Gita with all the critical apparatus available to him because the scripture is one of the notable books in the literature of the world. It is intellectual curiosity more than anything else that prompts a foreigner

to know what the Gita teaches. We ourselves are actuated by this spirit to read the Christian gospels or the Koran. But it is not in this way that a Hindu student should approach the Gita which thousands of his countrymen regard as a sacred book and which has shaped their spiritual ideals and satisfied their religious needs.

Lastly, there is the old-time Christian Missionary's way of reading the Gita, only for the purpose of finding fault with it and of proving by quoting isolated passages how it is inconsistent, unsatisfactory and, above all, far inferior to his own gospels. I admit that the attitude of the missionaries to Hinduism is somewhat changed now. But I doubt very much whether the change amounts to anything more than a change of tactics. The old Adam who believed that Christianity was the crown of Hinduism is still there. Only he has grown a little more polite. It is not in this supercilious spirit that the Gita should be read by our young men. Even when they come across verses which speak in terms of what may appear to be an obsolete science or an antiquated social order, they should pause and try to understand the spirit of the message and learn to distinguish the kernel from the husk of the living seed.



But probably some of my young friends may say, "Why should we read the Gita? We have so many books to read. The demands on our time are already too many." True, the demands are many. But this imperious demand will give a unity and a direction to all the other demands when once you admit it into your programme. Your life is a thing of shreds and patches till religion comes into it and makes it a seamless garment. For, remember, true religion is not a separate activity of your soul, but only the spirit in which you carry on all your activities. It is something which introduces order and singleness of aim into your manifold activities which otherwise would remain chaotic and aimless. The life of a truly religious man is like a statue carved out of a single rock, whereas the life of a man who has not come under the influence of a great religious ideal is like a scarecrow—a thing of shreds and patches. Moreover our lot is cast in a world full of sorrow, pain and disappointment. The pleasures that we have are fleeting. They seem to exist only to make our sorrows more poignant. Especially so in our country, which has been called "the land of tears and sorrow." In all this welter of poverty, unemployment, ignorance, disease and death, our mainstay for ages has been religion.

Without the consolations of religion the lot of our masses would have been much more miserable than it is. But it is not merely as a dope that I am recommending the study of the Gita to our young men. It is not to forget their cares and sorrows that I am asking them to read this scripture, but to look them full in the face and set in opposition to them their own unconquerable souls fortified by self-knowledge and faith in God.

There are some false prophets among us, especially among University teachers, who say that literature could serve the purpose of religion and that the study of poetry could be substituted for the study of the scripture. As I have elsewhere discussed this question at length, I will only state my conclusion here by quoting from one of my essays:—

“The centre of religion is nothing less than the expansion of consciousness beyond the limits of the individual mind so as to embrace that universal consciousness and bliss which we call Deity. It will be observed at once that the core of religion is in a way the very antithesis of the core of poetry. For it is the complete surrender of a separate self, the repudiation of the human standpoint. And to act thus is obviously to move away from the human

position of laughter and tears, of joy and sorrow, of love and hate. It is an attempt to reach a state in which man ceases to be man, and therefore poetry cannot follow him there without ceasing to be poetry. For poetry revels in the antinomies of emotion, while religion tries to transcend them. Poetry conserves all individual values, while religion surrenders them all. Poetry loves the rainbow colours of creation, while religion seeks the pure white radiance of eternity. Poetry lives and moves and has its being amid the many, while religion ascends to the One. Therefore, as an English mystic poet has said, "Poetry cannot save the soul, but makes it worth saving." Poetry enriches the treasures of the heart of man, and religion offers them at the feet of God."

Moreover, poetry has not got the driving power which religion has. It only points to the good life, but it cannot make you lead it. Therefore, young men, do not be carried away by the heresy that poetry could be a substitute for religion. Each has its own part to play in the progress of man. From my own experience as a student of literature and of religion I say that the functions of the two are separate, and that in fact religion begins where poetry leaves off.

This does not mean that you should wait till your old age for a serious study of religion. There is a misconception that religion is only for the old, that it is only after a man makes his money and retires from active life that he should begin to read the Bhagavad Gita and similar books. But if 'religion is to be a force that transforms our lives, if it is to be a spirit that gives a unity and a singleness of aim to all our activities and not simply a knowledge of doctrines or dogmas, what is the use of going to it when all our activities are over and when our lives have almost come to an end? What frequently happens is that when a man ignores in his early life the imperious need of his heart for a religion, he speedily becomes a prey to superstition. That is why many of our graduates who were sceptics in their University days become as bigoted and superstitious in their old age as any ignorant peasant. If it is not mere mechanical ritualism that satisfies them, it is often nothing more than a self-satisfied knowledge of the doctrines of a particular school of mediaeval theology. In any case it has little to do with conduct which is three-fourths of religion. How far the Gita is from such types of religion, it is partly the aim of these talks to show. I, therefore, implore all students to begin reading the Gita from to-day

and try to mould their lives according to its teaching. It is the best scripture for a Hindu who wants to know the essence of his religion and is in need of a spiritual guide. For the Gita is simple and easy on the whole; it is unsectarian; and, above all, it is a practical gospel. What vistas of spiritual life it opens up for the young student who allows it to influence his thought and conduct! No wonder that those who feel grateful to this scripture for the solace and guidance it gives call it their mother. Mahatma Gandhi once said in an address to students that he lost his mother early in life, but that the Gita took her place.\* That is really the feeling of every Hindu who has gone to it in moments of doubt, despair or sorrow.

If the necessity of the Gita for all Hindus who want to lead a good life with a worthy purpose is established, what is the right method of approaching it? First of all, are we to read the Gita in the original or in translations? The answer is simple. If you cannot read and understand it in the original, read it at least in translations. Let me say at once that I am not one of those who believe that a knowledge of Sanskrit is essential to our salvation. Please remember that the whole of Christendom reads

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\*Appendix I.

the message of its Master not in the Aramaic in which Christ is said to have delivered it, nor in the popular Greek in which it is recorded, but in the various vernaculars of Europe. No average Christian ever feels that he should learn Greek before he can understand the gospels. Similarly, no average Hindu should ever think that he cannot understand the message of the Gita without a knowledge of Sanskrit. I do not deny that it is an immense advantage to a Hindu student to possess a knowledge of Sanskrit. I myself am profoundly grateful to my father who made me take Sanskrit as my optional language in my High School classes. With the little knowledge of Sanskrit I picked up in my school and college classes, I have been able to read the Gita and also explore its sources, the Upanishads. But at the same time I say emphatically that a lack of the knowledge of Sanskrit is no excuse on the part of a Hindu student for being ignorant of the contents of the Gita. There are now available, and in cheap editions too, innumerable translations of the scripture. There are translations in our vernaculars, and there are translations in English. I should like to recommend both. For in the vernacular translations, at any rate in our Telugu, the same Sanskrit expressions are used as are found in the original, and they

will form an easy transition to the sacred verses themselves. But I am afraid many of these expressions have now become hackneyed and technical and have lost all their original freshness and so often fail to interpret the Gita in terms of modern life. And unless we understand the Gita in terms of our own lives, we cannot derive any benefit from it. For I cannot too often repeat that our students should read the Gita not as a piece of theology or philosophy, but as a practical guide to spiritual life. I venture to submit, therefore, that probably an English translation would serve their purpose better than a vernacular translation. Most of our students in schools and colleges at the present day think in English and, therefore, an expression like "a life of disinterested activity" has a greater appeal to their minds than the familiar expression—"Karma-Yoga." No wonder, therefore, that within the last thirty years, after the Gita was translated into English and made available to all at a nominal price, this scripture entered upon a new career of conquest. We must frankly admit that we owe an immense debt of gratitude to Mrs. Besant and to Messrs. G. A. Natesan and Co., for having popularised the Gita through a cheap English translation.

After the question whether the Gita should

be read in the original or in translations, comes the question of the commentaries. Are we to read the bare text or the text with the commentaries? I unhesitatingly say that in the early stages you should confine yourselves to the bare text. I know this is quite contrary to the traditional procedure. To some of our countrymen, reading the Gita without the commentary of some Acharya or other is simply anathema. I have the greatest respect for our Acharyas. We moderns are pigmies before these great giants. We are not fit to untie their shoes either in the region of scholarship or purity of life or singleness of aim. But we must remember that they interpreted the Gita and the Upanishads according to the needs of their age. They rendered invaluable service to Hinduism by emphasising those aspects of it which at the time were in danger of being ignored. If we are to be loyal to the spirit and not merely the letter of their great commentaries, we should try in our own humble way to interpret the Gita according to the needs of our own age and in terms of our own lives. In doing so we cannot, of course, ignore the traditional interpretations. In fact many a difficult verse would remain a dark mystery to us but for the light thrown upon it by a Sankara or a Ramanuja. But what I submit is that there are hundreds of



verses in the Gita which present no difficulty whatsoever and upon the interpretation of which all are agreed. These are quite enough for our purposes. We can go direct to them, translate them into the idiom of our day and assimilate their spirit. Therefore my advice to the young student has always been this. "Plunge into the Gita unaided. Read the bare text either in the original or in translation over and over again. Mark all those passages which appeal to you. Meditate on them and try to act on them. You will find that light will come to you in strange and unexpected ways. You might refer to the commentaries later on and find out the meaning of the difficult verses." But it is not impossible nowadays to find editions of the Gita either in English or our vernaculars which give you notes on the different interpretations given by the Acharyas of the difficult passages in it in a handy form. Such editions considerably simplify the task of even an advanced student of the Gita.

The next question is whether it is necessary to read the Gita every day as some people do, or whether it is enough to make a study of it, understand its message and leave it at that. Well, it all depends on the object with which you read it. If it is only to understand

the contents of a famous book, a more or less detailed study of it for a month or two would be enough. But if the Gita is to be used as a spiritual guide in every detail of your conduct, if the Yogin that it describes in several places is to be your ideal, it is necessary that you should go to this scripture every day. The Gita could be read through in two or three hours. But to understand and assimilate all that it teaches would probably take a whole life-time. Therefore the best procedure for a young student seems to be this. In the beginning he should read it through several times marking all the passages that appeal to him. Then he should take it chapter by chapter and read it carefully and try to understand the logical sequence of the versès. And finally he should make it a habit to read a chapter or a section of a chapter every morning and carry in his mind a verse or two and make his thoughts dwell on it in the course of the day, whenever he has leisure. Thus gradually the sacred words and expressions should soak into him and enter into the very fibres of his heart. From my own experience I tell you that you may read the Gita a thousand times and think you have exhausted its meaning, but the next time you go to it you will get a new light which you never dreamt of before. The suggestive-

ness of this wonderful book is really infinite, when once you approach it in the right spirit.

And what is the right spirit? Briefly, I think it is this. You should not look upon the Gita as simply a dialogue between two historical or quasi-historical characters in the remote past. You should look upon it as a living dialogue that goes on every day in the recesses of every striving soul. God speaks to us as He spoke to Arjuna on the field of battle, if only we tune our ears to hear His voice. His is a continuous revelation unto the children of men. His witnesses do not belong to the past only. His oracles are not dead. The truth of this you will understand, if only you look upon every verse in the Gita as addressed to you personally. Say to yourself whenever you read the scripture, "I myself am Arjuna. It is me that the Teacher is reprimanding when He says:—

'Whence has this loathsome feeling come upon thee in this crisis? It is ignoble, it is disgraceful, it debars thee from heaven. Do not yield to this weakness. It does not become thee. Shake off this base faintness of heart and stand up.' (II. 2 and 3.)

"It is me that He is addressing when He says:—

'Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou eatest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever

thou givest away and whatsoever of austerities thou dost practise—do that as an offering unto me.’ (IX. 27.)

“And finally it is me that He is taking into His loving arms when He says:—

‘Surrendering all duties, come unto me alone for shelter. Do not grieve, for I will release thee from all sins.’ (XVIII. 66)”

It is in this spirit, my friends, that I want you to approach the Gita. Unless you learn to interpret the sacred words in terms of your own lives, you cannot wring the secret out of them.

One word more. Nothing helps you to understand the suggestiveness of the Gita so well as a habit of prayer or contemplation. “Knock and it shall be opened, ask and it shall be given”. Sometimes we in our ignorance and foolishness ask for stone, and bread is given to us. In the early stages of a life of prayer we ask for the fleeting things of this world, but in a very short time we learn to overcome this weakness and are in a position to say, “Not my will, but Thy will be done”. A man who has learnt this lesson of surrendering his will to the will of God, who has understood the meaning of the injunction “Nimitta matram bhava Savyasachin” (Be thou only the outward

cause, O Arjuna) has come very near the core of the teaching of the Gita. Thus the habit of daily prayer and the habit of the daily reading of the Gita should supplement each other. They should be to us like the two wings of a bird. The wisdom of the ages and individual effort should both co-operate in achieving spiritual progress. Without individual effort there can be no progress; and without the guidance of the scripture there is no guarantee that the progress would be truly spiritual.

Gentlemen, to-day I have tried to confine myself to the subject "How to read the Gita." You should excuse my temerity in assuming that I am addressing those who have not yet read the Gita. I know that as a matter of fact there are many here who have read that book more often perhaps than I have done. But this series of talks is intended primarily for the benefit of young students who have not yet made their acquaintance with the Gita. That is why I have included in the series this preliminary and rather superficial talk on "How to read the Gita." To-morrow I will go to the subject proper and speak about the content and the form of the Gita.

## II

### THE CONTENT AND THE FORM OF THE GITA

I have always considered that the content and the form of the Gita cannot be better expressed than by the formula that is repeated at the end of every chapter of the book:—

“Thus in the Song of the Lord, in the Upanishad, in the science of the Absolute, in the scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this is the third or fourth chapter entitled etc.”

Let me, therefore, point out the implications of every phrase used in this colophon.

First of all, the scripture is called the Song of the Lord. It is a song or a series of songs. It is not, therefore, a theological or a philosophical treatise. Accordingly there are no clear-cut logical steps in the argument, nor are the terms used with any scientific precision or exactitude. There is a good deal of repetition and overlapping in the Gita. And many words are used in different senses. For instance, the word Yoga, which is the key to

the whole scripture, is used in half-a-dozen different senses. And the word Atman is used in the sense of body, mind, soul, oneself and the Absolute; and the word Brahman may mean the impersonal Absolute or a personal God or the sacred Veda. Therefore all attempts to read a cut and dried system into the Bhagavad Gita or divide the whole scripture into three equal *Shatkas*, the first dealing with Karma-yoga, the second dealing with Bhakti-yoga and the third dealing with Jnana-yoga, are bound to be futile. All that we can say is there are two streams of thought flowing throughout the poem, an ethical stream and a metaphysical stream dealing respectively with what man ought to do and what God is. In some chapters the ethical stream is more in evidence than the metaphysical stream, in some the metaphysical stream is more in evidence than the ethical stream, and in some both the streams flow side by side, sometimes even mingling their waters. A beginner, therefore, will do well to launch his frail boat on the almost transparent ethical stream and avoid for some time the blue metaphysical deeps full of jagged rocks on which many a theologian has planted his sectarian banner. But it is not always an easy task. For there are no clear demarcations. The transitions are

too abrupt. The logical sequence is not always obvious. But for the light thrown by Sankara and other great commentators, the connection between some of the verses would have been more obscure than it is. Even with all the helps that we have, we have to admit that the Gita as a whole is rather irregular. It is irregular as the mountains are irregular, as the forests are irregular, as the ocean is irregular. The fact of the matter is it is a poem, a collection of songs—not a work of theology or philosophy. Its appeal is to the whole man and not to his isolated logical understanding. The Gita touches our hearts, convinces our minds and shapes our wills. It covers the whole way of man's pilgrimage to the feet of God.

The second expression in the colophon is *Upanishatsu*. The Gita is looked upon as an Upanishad. In fact, it is the essence of all Upanishads which, as all of you know, are the ultimate sources of Hinduism. I need not remind you of the well-known verse which compares the Upanishads to cows, the Gita to milk, Krishna to a cow-herd and Arjuna to a calf. But the point to be noticed is that the Gita is a layman's Upanishad, as the Mahabharata which contains it is the layman's Veda. This means, firstly, that



the Gita is intended for all classes of men and not to the initiates only. In this scripture the gates of the heavenly kingdom are thrown open to all without any distinction of caste or creed, age or sex. The keys of salvation are put into the hands of all. Secondly, it means that the Gita is a fuller scripture than the Upanishads. In the Upanishads, only the last stages of the spiritual journey are referred to. The earlier stages are presupposed, for these forest treatises are meant for those who have qualified themselves for the instruction by the purity of their lives, by their faith in God and by their passion for the ultimate Reality. The seekers after truth in the Upanishads are those who have retired from the world, while the seeker after truth in the Gita, as typified by Arjuna, is a man who is still in the world and who is not yet free from its bonds. He is a novice in spiritual life. Therefore the Teacher has to begin at the very beginning. He has to begin with the alphabet of spiritual life. He has to tell the pupil that spiritual life does not mean the abandoning of his duties, but discharging them in a more faithful manner, in a more prayerful spirit, and with a different objective. He has to teach him that though the contemplative life is higher than the life of action, though the psalmist is nearer

God than the crusader; one cannot jump all at once to the top of the hill, but must proceed thither by stages. The Gita says:—

“Work is said to be the means of a sage who wants to attain to yoga; but when he has attained to yoga, serenity is said to be the means.” (VI. 3.)

Yoga or spiritual life is like a hill whose base is action and whose top is contemplation. It is through right kind of action that we rise to contemplation. Contemplative life without the preliminary training of active life is only vacuity, if not a delusion and a snare. This is the fundamental teaching of this layman’s Upanishad. By raising the Gita to the rank of an Upanishad and accepting its teaching as authoritative, Hinduism has only reaffirmed its faith in the principle of graded progress that underlies its ancient scheme of the four *asramas*.

The third expression in the colophon is *Brahmavidyam*. This shows at once that the Gita is not a mere manual of ethics. Its aim is Brahmanvidya or knowledge of God. The end of spiritual life is the vision of God. The second section of the Gita which begins with the seventh chapter opens with these words:—

“Hear thou, O Arjuna, how by fixing thy mind on me and taking refuge in me and prac-

## 22. THE CONTENT AND THE FORM OF THE GITA

tising Yoga, thou mayst without any doubt know me in full." (VII. 1.)

The sanctions of morality are found in religion. The ludicrous modern idea of teaching morality without religion gets no support from any great scripture in the world, and least of all from the Gita, shot through and through as it is with moral instruction. I have elsewhere pointed out that it is as absurd to say that the Gita is merely a gospel of social service or humanitarian work as to say that it is a gospel of duty for duty's sake. Let me quote a few sentences from my Introduction to the Gita on this point:—

"Similarly the Gita is not merely a gospel of social service or humanitarian work. The ideal Yogin that it describes is not a man who puts mankind in place of God. He does not worship society, he worships God. He is a servant of God before he becomes a servant of man. To him divine service comes first and social service next. With him work for humanity is only a mark or manifestation of that abounding life which comes to one who has entered the kingdom of Spirit. Social service which is divorced from spirituality is only an artificial flower which has neither life nor fragrance. The Gita, no doubt, in a famous phrase, insists on the importance of work for

the good of the world. But it insists much more on finding God who is the source of all goodness."

But no Hindu need ever be told that morality is no substitute for religion. His sin generally consists in going to the other extreme and making mere ritualism, an admittedly low kind of religion, a substitute for morality. However, it should be recognised by all that morality with its ever-receding ideal gains its completion only in religion, in which 'what ought to be' is merged in 'what is', and thus the unreal ideal becomes an actual fact. And it should also be recognised on the other hand that true religion always strengthens morality.

The fourth expression in the colophon is *Yoga-sastre*. The Gita is a Yoga-Sastra, its message is Yoga, its God is Yogesvara and the ideal man it describes is a Yogin. These four words, Yoga, Yogin, Yoga-Sastra and Yogesvara have to be carefully borne in mind by all who want to understand the import of the Gita. I cannot too often repeat that the word 'yoga' gives the clue to the whole scripture and that the word is used in the Gita in its primary sense of union or fellowship with God. The Gita is called a Yoga-Sastra because it teaches us the way to that union or fellowship. The union has to be achieved through righteous-

ness, through loving devotion, through intense meditation and through mystic vision. Accordingly we have the division of Yoga into Karma-yoga, Bhakti-yoga, Dhyana-yoga and Jnana-yoga. It is idle to contend that there is any fixed number of divisions or that there is any hard and fast line between one division and another. The way is one, as God is one. You may divide it into as many parts as you please, as you may call God by as many names as you please. For the way is a natural slope, not an artificial staircase in which you could count the steps. Spiritual life is a whole, and it involves the discipline of our will, our emotions and our intellect. So it is only for purposes of analysis that we isolate the discipline of the will and call it Karma-yoga, or the discipline of the emotions and call it Bhakti-yoga or the discipline of the intellect and call it Jnana-yoga. The various parts of Yoga can no more be separated from one another than the various functions of our minds could be separated from one another. The Bhagavad Gita at any rate knows no such separation. It treats yoga, which is the goal as well as the path of religious life, as one organic whole, though it dwells now on one aspect of it and now on another.

Again, it is significant that the Gita is called

a Yoga-sastra and not a Dharma-sastra, though the whole teaching arose out of a doubt regarding Dharma. Arjuna fears at the outset that by taking part in the war his immemorial Jati-dharma and Kula-dharma would be destroyed and he tells his Friend that his mind is perplexed about Dharma. Then at the end of the whole teaching he says: "My doubts are cleared. I will do what you say." (XVIII. 73.) And we know he fights. But, one may ask, what has happened to the immemorial Jati-dharma and Kula-dharma? Have they not been destroyed? And how does Arjuna look with equanimity on the destruction of these Dharmas which he held so dear? The fact of the matter is that there is an ocean of difference between the conception of Dharma with which Arjuna started and the conception of Dharma which the Bhagavan revealed to him through His teaching in the Gita. To put it briefly, Arjuna's conception of Dharma is mechanical, whereas the Bhagavan's conception is organic. What is the difference between a mechanism and an organism? A clock is a mechanism, a tree is an organism. In a clock the parts are put together externally. Its shape and size do not arise out of any inner necessity. They are determined from outside. Whereas in a tree the parts grow from within.

Its shape and size arise out of the inner principle of growth. A mechanism has no life, it cannot adjust itself to its environment. Whereas an organism is living and it has the power of adjusting itself to the changing conditions. Similarly, in a mechanical conception of Dharma we have only rigid rules imposed from without, whereas in an organic conception of it we have living laws arising from within. Rules are not ends in themselves. They are only means to an end. Their utility should always be judged by the degree to which they promote the end. If they cease to promote the end, they cease to have any utility. And if still they are kept on, they are only a hindrance to growth. They are like dead wood which is no help or ornament to a tree. So Dharma which consists only of mechanical rules without any living connection with Yoga or union with God, which is the end of religious life, is Dharma only for the ignorant. True Dharma is that which is in vital connection with Yoga. It adjusts itself from within as the soul progresses on the path of union. External rules are, no doubt, indispensable in the early stages, but a man who cannot dispense with them at some stage or other has ceased to grow. All of us require the help of a teacher in the beginning, but if we require his help throughout

there is undoubtedly something wrong with us. Rules, teachers, institutions and scriptures are only leading strings for the infant soul. I admit we are all infants in the kingdom of God. But the Gita which maps out for us the whole spiritual life boldly says that freedom from external control is the mark of spiritual adolescence, and that in the fellowship of God there is no such thing as immemorial, eternal, or unalterable Jati-dharma or Kula-dharma. All Dharmas are dissolved in the fruition of Yoga. In the presence of the king himself his deputies have no authority over us, though they have helped us to gain entrance into the royal chamber. Is this not the meaning of that famous and oft-quoted verse at the end of the Gita?

“Renouncing all Dharmas, come unto me alone for shelter. Grieve not. I will release thee from all sins.” (XVIII. 66.)

We now see why the Gita is not called a Dharma-sastra, though it arose out of a question of Dharma, and though the Bhagavan is described in it as a *Sasvata Dharma gopta*—the eternal guardian of Dharma, who incarnates himself from age to age for that very purpose. Yoga, as understood in the Gita, involves and transcends Dharma, as religious life involves and transcends ethical life.



## 28. THE CONTENT AND THE FORM OF THE GITA

We now come to the last expression in the colophon—*Sri Krishnarjuna samvade*. This denotes the form of the Gita, as the preceding expressions denote the contents of it. The Gita is in the form of a dialogue between two historical characters, who symbolise God and man. Without in any way calling into question the historicity of the Great War or the events that gave rise to this scripture, I may point out that the dialogue is a well-known literary form in the Upanishads, of which the Gita is said to be the essence. We have there the wonderful conversations between Yajnavalkya and Janaka, between Yama and Nachiketas, between Uddalaka and Svetaketu and so on. The form of the Gita, therefore, is quite in accordance with the tradition of the Upanishads, as its contents are quite in accordance with their message. Only just as the teaching is made clearer, more explicit and more coherent, so is the form made more distinct, dramatic and natural by the fact that the conversation between Krishna and Arjuna takes place at a supreme crisis in the history of our people.

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### III

## THE GITA AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

What is spiritual life? We judge a man generally by his external acts, for we do not know the thoughts in his mind. But spiritual life includes both. It represents what a man is, not in the eyes of his fellow beings, but in the eyes of God. You know the two estimates do not always coincide. Let me remind you of the famous passage on this point in Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

“Not on the vulgar mass  
Called “Work” must sentence pass,  
Things done, that took the eye and had  
the price;  
O’er which, from level stand,  
The low world laid its hand,  
Found straightway to its mind, could  
value in a trice:  
But all, the world’s coarse thumb  
And finger failed to plumb,  
So passed in making up the main account;

All instincts immature,  
All purposes unsure,  
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled  
the man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed  
Into a narrow act,  
Fancies that broke through language and  
escaped;

All I could never be,  
All, men ignored in me,  
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the  
pitcher shaped.

Browning does not include here all the evil propensities, petty meannesses, uncharitable suspicions and sinful fancies that often crawl over the walls of our minds like lizards. God takes into account even these when He judges us—not on an imaginary judgment day as Christians believe, but day by day and hour by hour.

Now, the practical question before us to-day is—How does the Gita help us to improve this inner life of our minds as well as our external conduct in the world? There are some commentators who say that the Gita is exclusively a gospel of Karma. There are others who say that it is exclusively a gospel of Bhakti, and there are others still who say

that it is exclusively a gospel of Jnana. For instance, to the late Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak the Gita is mainly a gospel of Karma-yoga, to Ramanuja it is a gospel of Bhakti-yoga and to Sankara it is a gospel of Jnana-yoga. But the Gita is not a sectarian gospel. It takes into account all aspects of spiritual life. It deals not only with Karma-yoga, Bhakti-yoga and Jnana-yoga, but also with Buddhi-yoga, Dhyana-yoga and Samnyasa-yoga. Therefore we should take its teaching as a whole and call it simply the gospel of Yoga or spiritual life.

Modern researches have established the fundamental unity that underlies the spiritual experiences of all saints of the world, whether they are Hindu or Buddhist, Jewish or Muslim, Christian or neo-Platonic. Though belonging to different religions, it is seen that all the great mystics of the world pass through the same stages of experience, witness the same landmarks and reach the same goal. I therefore believe that the proper thing for us to do is to classify the religions of the world according to this central steel frame of mystic or spiritual experience. Adopting the language of neo-Platonism, modern critics recognise three stages in the mystic way—the so-called purificatory stage, the illuminative stage and

the unitive stage. These three are preceded by the so-called awakening, which is the beginning of spiritual life. Purification, illumination and union correspond more or less to our Karma-yoga, Bhakti-yoga and Jnana-yoga. And the introductory awakening corresponds to our Buddhi-yoga which is preliminary to the other three yogas.

With the awakening, one may be said to have entered on "the paths". The first of these is the path of Karma. What is Karma? There are some who give the word the narrow meaning of rituals. But the Gita uses it in a comprehensive sense. Karma includes all voluntary acts of man which have any moral value. The Gita points out that morals are higher than rituals. At the same time it does not ignore the value of rites and ceremonies. For in the eighteenth chapter it says:—

"Sacrifices, gifts and penance purify the wise." (XVIII. 5.)

But very often it happens in the history of every religion that ritualism gets a firm grip over men's minds and throttles all true spiritual life. All the great prophets of the world had to fight against the soulless ritualism and priestcraft of their day. You remember the scathing terms in which Christ

spoke of the Pharisees of his country. The Rishis of our Upanishads had similarly to protest against excessive faith in ritualism. And similarly the author of the Gita roundly declares that all those who over-emphasize rituals are fools:—

“Fools who rejoice in the letter of the Veda say, ‘There is nothing else but this.’ ” (II. 42.)

If we were to represent religion as a human figure, rituals 'would form its feet, while morals would be its hands. In other words, karma which includes both rituals and morals would be its limbs, while bhakti would be its heart and jnana its head.

The Gita's denunciation of excessive and soulless ritualism has not lost its force even to-day. I am sorry to say that there are many amongst us even now who are very punctilious about their rites and ceremonies, but rather careless about their morals. Therefore we cannot too often point out to our people that moral purity is far higher than mere ceremonial purity.

The Gita says that even rites and ceremonies should be performed in a spirit of detachment and with no desire for fruit. This brings us to the famous formula of Nishkama-Karma. What does Nishkama-karma, which is supposed

to be the characteristic teaching of the Gita, mean exactly? Most of our actions are prompted by a worldly desire. They have a worldly object in view. We care more for the consequences of our actions than for their inherent rightness. Remember how often Arjuna in the first chapter of the Gita harps on the consequences of his taking part in the battle and never on the rightness of his doing so. A spiritual man cares more for what is right for him to do than for what consequences will follow. He shifts the aim from this world to the other world, from a material plane to a spiritual plane. Hence while the actions of a worldly man have various worldly aims like fame, riches, power and pleasure, the actions of a spiritual man have all a single aim—the betterment of his spiritual nature. The Gita says:—

“In this (Karma-yoga) the resolute mind has a single aim, O Arjuna, but the thoughts of the irresolute are manifold and endless.” (II. 41.)

When the resolute soul thus learns to substitute a single spiritual aim for a thousand worldly aims, it finds to its great joy that there is no such thing as failure. For every good deed and every kind thought automatically exalts the soul. When we work for power

or fame or wealth, we may succeed or fail in the world according to the circumstances, but if we work only for the improvement of our spiritual nature we cannot but succeed. Sometimes what the world regards as a most ignominious failure may be from the point of view of the spirit a crowning victory, and vice versa. The greatest victories in the world are often due to the compromises of the spirit, to the lowering of the standards and the accommodation of evil. So the Gita advises us to have our eyes always on the spiritual goal and to apply to all our actions the same spiritual principle. If we do this steadily we find that our efforts are never lost and that nothing can stand in the way of our progress. The Gita says:—

“In this no effort is ever lost, and no harm is ever done.” (II. 40.)

Moreover, as the complete liberation of the spirit from the bonds of matter is the ultimate aim of this evolving universe, the Karma-yogin who has always a spiritual aim in all his doings will come to feel that he is in the hands of God, that he is the instrument of a divine purpose and that he is “in tune with the Infinite.” Before the awakening, he was a *Sakta* or one who is attached to the world and therefore who is prompted by a thousand worldly



motives in all his actions. But now he has become a *Yukta* or one who is in consonance with the Eternal Spirit and who is therefore prompted by a single spiritual motive in all that he does. The aim of the whole Bhagavad Gita is to convert a *Sakta* into a *Yukta*, to wean the immortal soul from its worldly pre-occupations and to restore it to the bosom of the Eternal Spirit from which it came.

It is sometimes said that the ideal of *Nishkama-karma* does not differ from the Stoic ideal of duty for duty's sake. But this is a mistake. For the ideal man of Stoicism endures all evils coldly biting his lips, and discharges his duties, while the ideal yogin of the Gita feels every moment that he is the servant of God and that in His service lies not only perfect freedom but also perfect joy. The Gita is not a cold gospel of duty for duty's sake. It is a Gospel of duty for God's sake. The ideal wise man of Stoicism relies on himself in combating the ills of the world, whereas the Yogin of the Gita, like the saint of all Theisms, derives his strength from God in whom he consciously lives and moves and has his being.

From this description of the Karma-yogin you will see that there is no hard and fast line between Karma and Bhakti. We have already unconsciously passed from Karma to Bhakti.

It is only for the sake of analysis that we separate these two aspects of spiritual life. Spiritual life is one, though it has many facets which we might isolate for purposes of discussion. Even in speaking of Karma-yoga the Gita says that a man should learn to give up both the fruits of action and the agency of action. Herein lies the germ of Bhakti-yoga. How does a man learn to give up the agency of action while actually taking part in it? It is only by means of self-forgetting love. He must die unto himself and live unto God. It is only when we make ourselves perfect instruments of God, eliminating every trace of self and ever saying "Not my will, but Thy will be done," that we transcend the law of Karma. As long as we are self-centred we are in the region of Samsara or moral causation. As we sow, we reap. But true Bhakti or self-forgetting love of God lifts us out of the region of mere morality to a spiritual plane where a higher law—the law of Love—prevails. Karma-yoga is thus the solvent of the Law of Karma inasmuch as a man who surrenders to God both the the fruit of action and the agency of action partakes of His nature and goes beyond the region of births and deaths.

Thus the Bhakti-yoga that is taught in the Gita is only the inside view of Karma-yoga.

It is very different from the excessive emotionalism of our later Bhakti Schools. In the Gita the warm emotion of Bhakti is held in its place by moral enthusiasm on one side and spiritual vision on the other. It is in fact one of the most remarkable features of this great scripture that according to its teaching the various components of spiritual life—Karma, Bhakti and Jnana—should be kept in perfect balance and harmony. Obviously, therefore, those who make the Gita predominantly a gospel of Karma-yoga or Bhakti-yoga or Jnana-yoga seem to me to go against the very spirit of its teaching.

The intensive phase of Bhakti-yoga is called Dhyana-yoga in the Gita. It consists of moments of rapt prayer when the soul lifts itself to the heights of the eternal Being and stands speechless, but satisfied. There is a wonderful description of it in the Sixth Chapter:—

“That in which the mind is at rest restrained by the practice of concentration, that in which he beholds the spirit through the mind and rejoices in the spirit:

“That in which he knows the boundless joy beyond the reach of the senses and grasped only by the understanding and that in which

when he is established, he never departs from reality:

“That on gaining which he feels there is no greater gain and that in which he abides and is not moved even by the heaviest of afflictions—let that be known as yoga.” (VI. 20-23.)

Here is a type of spiritual experience which only these who lead a life of prayer and meditation can appreciate. In the face of such verses it is absurd to say that the Gita is merely a gospel of duty for duty's sake or that it is a gospel of humanitarian work or social service. I cannot too often repeat that it is a comprehensive gospel of Yoga or spiritual life and that it includes all the ways and means by which man is brought into union with God.

It is this union with God that we call Jnana or self-realisation. The word Jnana, as it is used in our Vedantic literature, has no corresponding equivalent in English. Jnana does not mean mere knowledge, though the two words come from the same root. It is much more than knowledge. It comprises both knowing and being. For we can never know God as we know a tree or a building, as an object outside ourselves. God is not an object. He is the eternal subject. Therefore we cannot

attain to Him through external knowledge, but by internal growth. Here knowing is being. That is, to the extent to which we partake of the divine nature we may be said to know Him. I take it that that is the meaning of the verse in the Gita:—

“Thou alone knowest Thyself through Thyself, O Supreme Person.” (X. 15.)

In the Eleventh Chapter of the Gita we have an attempt at the description of those rare moments in the life of a soul when space and time seem to be abolished and when it has a vision of the far and the near, of the past, the present and the future as a single Reality in which the experiencing soul is itself included. Some of us who are of a romantic temperament have a momentary glimpse of this experience when we are moved by a great tragedy or when we fall in love. But a man who is well established in Jnana has more or less a steady vision of this all-including spirit and he acts in the light of it. In the words of the Gita he sees all beings in himself and himself in all beings, and, being a perfect Yogin, he looks upon all creatures as himself in pleasure and in pain. He sees the fundamental mystic unity of all things in God. Mahatma Gandhi once said that we all share one another's sins and virtues. According to our belief this con-

sciousness, this power, is not the exclusive privilege of any one unique soul, but of all souls. Jnana is the heritage of all. It is the goal of the mystic way. It is the final stage of spiritual life.

Spiritual life begins with the awakening and proceeds along Karma and Bhakti and reaches its culmination in Jnana. But there are no hard and fast lines between one phase and another. Spiritual life is not a staircase in which we can count the steps. It is a gentle slope that leads us to the feet of God.

## IV

### THE GITA AND CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT

Yesterday we saw how the Yoga taught in the Gita is an expression of universal mystic experience. Its various stages correspond roughly to the stages of the mystic way revealed to us in the biographies of the great saints and mystics of the world. To-day we come to another aspect of the Gita, its relation to the religious thought of its day—how it absorbed and transcended all the types of religion existing among the people at the time when this scripture came into existence. I will try to show its relation to six types or groups of religious thought and practice. The Gita is a gospel of toleration. The great teacher tolerates almost every type of thought and at the same time points out its weakness and shows the higher way. He does not like to unsettle the minds of the ignorant. It is only when a man adds obstinacy to intolerance that He grows indignant.

The first group of thinkers we have to consider consists of atheists, materialists and free thinkers. Yesterday a gentleman from the audience in this hall sent up to me a slip of paper containing the following question—“What is the message of the Gita to a man who has no faith in the existence of God?” The answer is given in the sixteenth chapter of the scripture which I recommend to this gentleman for careful study. He will find that the teacher condemns in scathing terms all atheists, materialists and free thinkers, but only when their doctrines lead to immorality or social disruption. His advice to these misguided men is twofold. First, let them avoid the three gates of darkness that lead to the ruin of their souls, namely lust, wrath and greed. He says:—

“The man who has escaped these three gates of darkness, O Arjuna, works out his own good and reaches the highest state.” (XVI. 22.)

Secondly, let them follow the lead of scriptures and they will emerge out of darkness into light. We do not know exactly what schools of contemporary thought the Teacher had in his mind in the sixteenth chapter. It is believed, however, that those who later came to be called Charvakas were the principal offenders. But, as I have said, it is only when



their doctrines lead to wicked deeds that they seem to be shut out of grace. Thus the line of toleration that the Gita draws is the lowest possible.

The second group of men, whose thought and practice we have to consider, consists of ritualists. I have already said that the Gita gives the right place to rites and ceremonies in religious life, but condemns the ritualists who make a fetish of them. It extends the meaning of the two popular words Karma and Yajna. Karma in a popular sense means rituals. But the Gita does not use it in this narrow sense. According to it Karma includes all the conscious actions of a man which have an ethical or spiritual value. Once in Madras a gentleman speaking on the Gita boldly declared that the word Karma in the Gita always meant ritualistic action (Yajna Yagadi Karma). I had to ask him what he would say to the question of Arjuna in the first verse of the third chapter.

“If thou dost hold that insight is superior to action, why dost thou urge me to this horrible action (Karma), O Krishna?” (III. 1.)

Here obviously action is not ritualistic action. Scores of such passages could be quoted to show that the Gita uses the word Karma

in a comprehensive sense so as to include moral and spiritual actions as well as ritualistic acts.

Similarly it extends the meaning of the word Yajna. In the fourth chapter after describing the various kinds of Yajna it says:—

“Knowledge as a sacrifice is superior to all sacrifices of material objects.” (IV. 33.)

Again in the tenth chapter the Bhagavan says:—

“Of all offerings I am the offering of silent prayer.” (X. 25.)

Nay, more. We can enjoy all objects of this world in a true sacrificial spirit. Enjoyment could be made an act of sacrifice. There is a beautiful verse in the fourth chapter which I often repeat to myself:—

“Some offer as sacrifice their sense of hearing and other senses in the fires of restraint; while others offer sound and other objects of sense in the fires of their senses.” (IV. 26.)

Look at the latter half of this verse. We are told that our senses are the sacrificial fires and all objects of sense are the sacrificial offerings. How far, by the way, are we here from animal sacrifices! I take it that the meaning here is the same as that of another favourite verse of mine in the second chapter:—

“A man of disciplined mind who moves among the objects of sense with his senses fully under his control and free from love and hate—he attains to a clear vision.” (II. 6.)

The Gita thus recognises the importance of the principle of sacrifice in religious life. In fact sacrifice is the key to all spiritual life, or, as the Gita puts it poetically, it is our cow of plenty, our Kamadhenu, which the Creator brought into being along with us.

The next group of men whose religious ideals may be considered in relation to the teaching of the Gita is that of ascetics. India loves an ascetic. The sannyasin who has renounced the world and who subjects himself to severe penances is a very popular figure in this country. The Gita too in almost every page insists on the conquest of the senses, on the discipline of body and mind. But it condemns excessive asceticism, as it condemns excessive ritualism. It distinguishes true *tapas* from false *tapas* and deprecates the latter in rather severe terms. It says:—

“Vain and conceited men compelled by the force of their desires and passions subject themselves to terrible mortifications not ordained by scriptures.

“And being foolish they torture their bodily organs and me also who dwell within the body.

Know that such men are fiendish in their resolves." (XVII. 5-6.)

If this is false *tapas*, what is true *tapas*? We have a description of the latter in the following verses:—

"The worship of the gods, of the twice-born, of teachers and of the wise; purity, uprightness, abstinence and non-violence—these are said to be the penance of the body.

"The utterance of words which do not give offence and which are truthful, pleasant and beneficial, and the regular recitation of the Veda—these are said to be the penance of speech.

"Serenity of mind, beneficence, silence, self-control and purity of heart—these are said to be the penance of the mind." (XVII. 14-16.)

Again, in the sixth chapter of the Gita where the author comes very near the technical Yoga practices associated with the name of Patanjali he prescribes no rigid rules for the crucifixion of the flesh. On the other hand he strikes an extraordinarily modern note when he says:—

"Yoga is not for him who eats too much, nor for him who eats too little. It is not for him who is given to too much sleep nor for him who

keeps vigils too long. But for the man who is temperate in his food and recreation, who is restrained in all his actions and who is regulated in his sleep and vigils, Yoga puts an end to all sorrows." (VI. 16-17.)

Thus the Gita follows here, as everywhere, the golden mean. It recognises that discipline and renunciation are not ends in themselves, but are only means to an end.

Next we come to the group of scientists. The relation of the Gita to the scientific thought of its day is a very fascinating study, but unfortunately it is rather technical in character. So it is not possible for me in a popular lecture to go into all the details. I must content myself with a brief indication of the outlines. The Gita accepts all that is valuable in the speculations of the Sankhyas and rejects their errors. It accepts the concept of Prakriti and the Sankhyan theory of the evolution of the world. It accepts the three Gunas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—the inherent qualities of Prakriti. It admits like the Sankhyas that the soul is deluded in thinking that it is the doer, when the forces of Prakriti are really responsible for every thing that is done. It also admits that the liberated soul is free from this delusion and transcends the three Gunas.

But the Gita alters the whole trend of the Sankhya system by its Upanishadic concept of Brahman in its two aspects of Nirguna and Saguna. God, according to the Gita, is not simply a witness of the evolutions of Nature. He is the governor and controller of them. Prakriti is His own. It is His lower manifestation. And the souls of men are His higher manifestation. Finally, the liberated soul is not only free from the thralldom of Prakriti, but is also in conscious union with God. Thus the Gita makes use of the Sankhya metaphysics and psychology in popularizing the Upanishadic revelation. And at the same time it rejects the atheistic dualism of that system. It is to be noted therefore that the relation between the Gita and the scientific thought of the time was a correct and healthy relation.

The skilful way in which the scientific terms of Sankhya are employed in the Gita to express the universal religious experience of men is very well illustrated by its use of the words Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. In the Gita these words sometimes mean the inherent qualities of Prakriti as in the Sankhya system. And sometimes they simply mean first-rate, second-rate and third-rate. But more often Tamas means the animal being of man, Rajas his psychic being, and Sattva his moral and spi-

ritual being. Therefore if we regard these three terms simply as the technical scientific jargon of Sankhya, as some western scholars are disposed to do, we miss a good deal of the teaching of the Gita. If, on the other hand, we regard them as referring to the moral, mental and physical aspects of man, some of the verses in which they occur leap into light and go to the very heart of universal religious experience.

The next group of men whose relation to the Gita we have to consider consists of the polytheists who worship the many gods of the Hindu Pantheon. Here again the Gita shows its wise and tolerant attitude. Worship of every kind is tolerated and even encouraged. But the higher way of the worship of the Isvara, whose imperfect forms are all these popular gods, is also clearly shown. The verses that have to be quoted in this connection are well known:—

“Whatever may be the form which each devotee seeks to worship with faith—I make his faith steadfast in that form alone.

“Possessed of faith he worships that form and his desires are fulfilled, granted in fact by me alone.” (VII. 21-22.)

But the Gita does not stop there. The greatness of the Gita lies in taking up every

type of religious thought and practice gently by the hand and showing it the higher way. It is our own human limitations that are responsible for the various conceptions of God prevailing among us. All forms of Him from the highest down to the lowest are imperfect. But behind them all is the same perfect Reality. Just as the ocean is one and has the same salt water throughout, though we have given innumerable names to the various seas and gulfs and bays, so is the ultimate Reality behind all the gods and goddesses of our popular Hinduism. We tolerate the various kinds of worship obtaining among the masses, but we stop there. We do not follow the lead of the Gita and show them the higher way. We make a false use of the doctrine of Adhikara and derive specious arguments from it in defence of our indifference and inaction. What excuse is there for our not stopping inhuman practices like animal sacrifices? Certainly we are not following the lead of the Gita in allowing our popular religion and popular forms of worship to drift for themselves and degenerate from day to day without the consciousness of the ever present Reality behind them. It is our sacred duty to strive for higher ideals and purer forms of worship not only in our own lives but also in the society to which we belong.



Lastly, we come to the group of quietists who derive inspiration from the Upanishads, but who think that one should desist from every kind of activity if one would be saved. What is the relation of the Gita to these? Well, it may be said that the whole Gita is one long protest against this type of thought. The Gita, of course, accepts the principle of Sannyasa, as it accepts the principles of Yajna, Karma and Chaturvarnya, but gives it a higher and a healthier turn. According to it, Sannyasa is not renunciation of all work, but it is the renunciation of all self-centred work. •

“He who does the work he ought to do and does not seek its fruit—he is a Sannyasin and he is a Yogin, not he who does no work and maintains no sacred fires.” (VI. 1.)

A true Sannyasin takes part in all activities, but offers them to God in the spirit of a sacrificer. To enforce its teaching and bring it home to us the Gita cites the example of Isvara Himself. It asks us—Does not God work in the world? Is not His hand seen behind every activity of Nature? Does He not make the sun shine in the day and the moon shed its dew in the night on every herb? Does He not make the sap rise in the veins of trees? Does He not make the fire burn and the creatures breathe? Does He not enter the minds of men and make

them know, remember and forget? And in doing all this, is He in any way restless? Has he any object to gain which He does not possess already? Is He not eternally quiescent as Brahman and eternally active as Isvara? Are not eternal rest and eternal activity mysteriously combined in Him? So should they be in man. He should act, and yet act not. His renunciation should be internal, and his activity external. His mind should be at rest, but his hands should be ever busy. He should abide in God, but work in the world to promote His purpose. That is the reply that the Gita gives to the quietists. That is the secret of Karma-yoga, and that is the message of this great scripture.

Thus you see, gentlemen, that the method of the Gita is the same whether it has to deal with ritualists or ascetics, with scientists or polytheists or quietists. It sympathises with them, recognises the elements of value in their thought and practice, but gently points out the error of their ways, throws light on their limitations and leads them to a better and higher way.

## THE GITA AND SVADHARMA.

The Gita strikes an extraordinarily modern note by its clear and unmistakable recognition of the influence of natural forces in man's organism. Let me quote a few verses in proof of this statement:—

“Every one is driven to act in spite of himself by the impulses of Nature.” (III. 5.)

“All beings follow Nature, what can repression do?” (III. 33.)

“The faith of men is of three kinds. It is in accordance with their natural disposition.” (XVII. 2.)

“Fettered by thy own tendencies, O Arjuna, which are born of thy nature, that which through delusion thou seekest not to do, thou shalt do even against thy will.” (XVIII. 60.)

And in the following verse man's relation to Nature is contrasted with God's:—

“Controlling Nature which is My own, I send forth again and again all this multitude of beings which are helpless under the sway of Nature.” (IX. 8.)

It is thus clear that man is a being that belongs to two worlds—the natural world and

the spiritual world. He has a body which belongs to the former and a soul which belongs to the latter. Now, the question is, what should be the relation between the two? In other words, are we to encourage the natural man or suppress him altogether or utilise him for the purposes of the spirit? No religion worth the name ever countenances the first view. It is only some secular systems of philosophy that make pleasure the end of life. But these hedonistic systems, as they are called, are not worth our attention. Our spiritual instincts rise in rebellion at once against such a philosophy. Ninety per cent. of men, no doubt, act on the hedonistic principle, but when it is put to them as philosophy, they are ashamed to own it. The opposite extreme of hedonism is asceticism. This takes for granted that the natural man is the enemy of the spiritual man and should be suppressed. We must concede at once that all religions are based on the ascetic principle that the spirit should conquer the flesh. But in every religion there are Puritan sects who look with suspicion on every desire of the natural man and seek to eradicate it. They glory in the torture of the flesh, they look askance at all forms of art, and are afraid of beauty. They are intolerant, narrow-minded and priggish. Naturally, therefore,

they become the objects of ridicule and satire, in spite of all their virtues. What the attitude of the Gita is to this school of thought we saw yesterday. In one passage, no doubt, it seems to agree with the ascetics. In the last section of the third chapter, you remember, Arjuna asks the famous question. "But what impels a man to commit sin, O Krishna, in spite of himself and driven as it were by a force?" The reply is:—

"It is desire, it is wrath which springs from passion. A monster of greed and sin—know it is our enemy here."

And the section ends with the words:—  
"Therefore know Him who is higher than the understanding, control the lower self by the higher self and kill the enemy, O Arjuna, who comes in the guise of desire and who is hard to overcome." (III. 37-40.)

Here, as I have said, the Gita seems to agree with the ascetics who are out for the eradication of all natural desires. But I submit this is not the real view of the scripture. Taking the Gita as a whole, we find that it is only when Kama or desire leads to sin that it takes up an uncompromising attitude. For in a famous verse it identifies Kama when it is not opposed to Dharma with God Himself.

“I am the desire in all creatures, O Arjuna, when it is not in conflict with the Law.” (VII. 11.)

And you remember that yesterday I quoted some verses which show that the Gita countenances neither extreme indulgence nor extreme abstinence, but that it is for the golden mean. According to it the natural man should neither be encouraged nor suppressed, but wisely directed. It says:—

“Love and hatred are bound to arise towards the objects of each sense. But let no man come under the sway of these, for they are his enemies.” (III. 34.)

How are we to direct the natural man in us wisely? This is a problem which every established religion has to tackle. The sublimation of our natural instincts, inclinations and appetites has to be effected satisfactorily by every religion which has to deal with large masses of men. The Gita's solution of the problem is contained in the word Svadharma. It says:—

“Better one's own Dharma, though imperfectly carried out, than the Dharma of another carried out perfectly. Better is death in going by one's own Dharma. The Dharma of another is fraught with fear.” (III. 35.)

It is difficult to translate the word Dharma into English. There is not a single English word which can connote all that the sanskrit word Dharma cannotes. The Greek word *Arete* comes much nearer our Dharma than any English word like virtue or duty or law or righteousness. We may almost say that just as *Arete* embraces the whole of Greek humanism, so Dharma embraces the whole of Hindu ethics. The Greeks noticed that everything in this world was capable of an ideal perfection. This is true not only of things like a knife or a clock, but also of living beings like a horse or a bull, and, above all, of man. The best that man is capable of as man, and not merely as a sculptor or an athlete, that was what the Greek sages were in search of. That was what they called the *Arete* of man. It will be seen at once that *Arete* is not a static or a narrow conception. The ideal grows with the growing man. For who can set limits to the growth of human perfection? Nor is *Arete* the same for every individual. It depends upon the peculiar endowments of each individual and the circumstances in which he is placed. Therefore *Arete* has an individual as well as a universal aspect. Similarly we have Dharma which is universal and Svadharma which is individual. It is only through the sublimation

of the individual that the universal could be gained. We cannot, of course, jump out of ourselves. But we can infinitely expand ourselves through imagination, love, and sympathy. We have first of all to be true ourselves, to the law of our own being. We have to achieve the best we are capable of by perfecting our natural endowments and by making the most of our circumstances. And this ideal perfection of the individual is to be made subservient to a divine purpose. It is exactly here, by the way, that the Greeks failed. Their *Arete*, in spite of its wonderful vitality and expansive power, was purely human. It had no reference to God or to a divine purpose in the universe. Whereas in India, Dharma was never purely human. It was never divorced from Yoga or union with the Divine. In fact it was considered the way to that union. It had never any value independent of that end. That is why probably Hindu culture still maintains its ground, while the Greeks and their civilization have passed a way.

Now, coming back to the subject of Svadharma, we have to note carefully that the author of the Gita explicitly connects it not merely with the caste system but with the individual's own Svabhava or nature. The verse about Svadharma which I have already quoted



is repeated in the final chapter of the Gita with a very significant variation, "He who does the duty imposed on him by his own nature incurs no sin." (XVIII. 47.)

Thus the Gita connects Svadharma with Svabhava. That is, our natural gifts have to be fully developed and utilized for the service of God. Nature is to be regarded not as the enemy of the spirit, but as its great ally. It is not to be suppressed, but wisely directed. The advantages of such a line of action are many. Firstly, Svadharma connotes ease and spontaneity. It is the line of least resistance. According to the teaching of the Gita, an action which is not done with perfect ease is not the best, and an action which is beyond one's capacity and which is undertaken through ignorance and without regard to consequences is the worst. In the eighteenth chapter the scripture divides all actions into three classes and labels them Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Under the first class come those actions which are organically related to one's own nature, under the second those which involve great strain and under the third those which are undertaken without regard to one's capacity. The Gita view is that we should perform our duties as a tree performs its duty of producing flower and fruit—with perfect ease and spontaneity, in

silence and sublime unconsciousness. Marcus Aurelius comes very near this view-point when he says in his meditations:—

“As a horse when he has run, a dog when he has caught the game, a bee when it has made its honey, so a man when he has done a good act, does not call out for others to come and see, but he goes on to another act, as a vine goes on to produce again the grapes in season.”

Again, “What more dost thou want when thou hast done a man a service? Art thou not content that thou hast done something conformable to thy nature and dost thou seek to be paid for it, just as if the eye demanded a recompense for seeing or the feet for walking?”

Thus the gospel of Svadharma demands that man should play his part in the spiritual world consciously and voluntarily as birds and beasts and trees play their part in the natural world unconsciously and involuntarily. He must recognise his essential nature and take to the spirit as fish to water and learn to live in it as in his own natural element.

Secondly, Svadharma connotes not only ease and spontaneity, but also efficiency. When our duties are organically related to our natural endowments they could be most efficiently discharged, whereas when they are forced on us they go against the grain and are very ineffi-

ciently discharged. Therefore an ideal society is one in which all men are assigned duties which they are most fitted to discharge, in which every man's Svadharma is based on his Svabhava. The system of four castes conceived by the Indian sages and to which India tried to conform throughout her chequered history was one such ideal society. And it is to that ideal pattern that the Gita refers in two places—in the fourth and eighteenth chapters. As the Gita's attitude to the caste system is often given a somewhat narrow interpretation, let us carefully examine these passages.

If we examine the context in the fourth chapter, we find that the reference to the caste system is made only incidentally as an illustration of the general principle contained in the verse:—

“He who knows my divine birth and works will never be born again when he leaves his body, but will come to me, O. Arjuna”. (IV. 9.)

What is the mystery of the divine incarnation and of divine action? Briefly it is this. Though He is unborn, He takes birth. Though He is actionless, He acts. God is the Absolute. He is unborn. Yet He is born from age to age, when the needs of the world require Him. That is the mystery of the Avatar. Again, as

Brahman He is quiescent, changeless and transcending time. But as Isvara He is active, He is the creator within the frame-work of Time. It is to illustrate this last statement that the caste system is brought in in that off-quoted verse:—

“The system of four castes was created by me, according to the division of aptitudes and works. Though I am their creator, know thou that I neither act nor change.” (IV. 13.)

The second half of the verse is the primary thing, the first half is secondary. The object of the verse, as judged by the context, is not to expound the principles of the caste-system, but to expound the mystery or the paradox of divine action—that He acts and yet He acts not. The Teacher might have taken anything in the world to illustrate his thesis, for everything in the world is God-made. However, even in a casual reference like this, he shows his insight into the principles that should underlie an ideal society. The hint he gives us in the phrase “according to the division of aptitudes and works” is expanded in the eighteenth chapter. And in what context is it done? There his thesis is the force of Nature in man.

“There is no creature here on earth, nor again among the gods in heaven, which is free

from these three dispositions of Nature.”  
(XVIII. 40.)

It is to illustrate this principle—the force of Svabhava—that the caste system is again brought in. The Gita now deliberately connects the external occupations of the four castes with the internal aptitudes of men and ends with the famous verse:—

“Man reaches perfection by devotion to his own duty or profession.” (XVIII. 45.)

In this connection I cannot do better than quote a paragraph from the *Essays on the Gita* by Aurobindo Ghose:—

“The Gita accepted the Vedic theory of sacrifice, but gave it a profound turn, an inner, subjective and universal meaning, a spiritual sense and direction which alters all its values. Here too, and in the same way, it accepts the theory of the four orders of men, but gives to it a profound turn, an inner, subjective and universal meaning, a spiritual sense and direction. What the Gita is concerned with is not the validity of the Aryan social order now abolished or in a state of deliquescence, but the relation of man’s outward life to his inward being, the evolution of his action from his soul and inner law of nature.”

These words are profoundly true. The caste system in our religious literature has

always been only an ideal. As far as historical records go, there have never been the four clear-cut divisions of Indian society postulated in our sacred books. The Indian sages meant by the caste system an ideal society in which every man's position would be organically related to his aptitudes. At any rate, that seems to be the view of the author of the Gita.

Finally, Svadharma connotes not only ease, spontaneity and efficiency, but also grace and beauty. For what is beauty but the blissful perfection which all created things attain when they are true to the law of their own being? The most beautiful rose is that which most nearly approaches the ideal pattern of a rose, the most beautiful horse is that which most nearly exhibits all the parts and functions of an ideal horse. The vine which produces grapes in their season, therefore, displays not only spontaneity and efficiency, but also beauty. Similarly all men and women, when they are following their own *Arcte* or Svadharma, have an inimitable grace which will arrest the attention of an artist. On the other hand, when they are not true to themselves, when they go against the law of their being, as when women try to be manly, or when Indians ape Europeans, or vice versa, they make them-

selves only ridiculous. In a word, all affectation or pose is ugliness and is contrary to the principle of Svadharma.

1. Gentlemen, I have done. I hope I have said enough to show that the Gita doctrine of Svadharma does not merely mean, in the words of Aurobindo Ghose, that the sons of washermen should do nothing but wash clothes for all time, that the sons of shoe-makers should do nothing but make shoes for all time, as some commentators would have us believe. No. The Bhagavad Gita goes much deeper than that. It recognises the force of natural disposition in man and teaches that every man should first be true to himself and should make the best of his natural gifts and utilise them for the service of God. If he does this, he will achieve for himself and the society in which he lives, efficiency, freedom, harmony and beauty. That, I take it, is the essence of Svadharma.

## THE GITA AND PROGRESS.

One of the charges levelled against Hinduism by its Western critics is that it is too other-worldly, that it teaches men to turn away from this world and its problems, to cultivate a spirit of monkish piety and care only for their own salvation. We all know that this is a false charge based on an imperfect knowledge of our religion. But the question we have specifically to ask ourselves to-day is—‘What does the Gita say on this point? Is its teaching confined to the subject of individual salvation? Has it no thought for society?’ The question is very important for all those who want to use the Gita as a guide in everyday practical life. And I cannot too often urge that we should use this scripture not as a textbook of philosophy or theology, but as a practical gospel enabling us to live the good life.

It may be remarked at once that the very form of the Gita and the context in which it occurs, apart from its contents, are a repudiation of the charge mentioned above. For, we have only to ask ourselves—What is all this



dialogue for? What is the object of the divine interlocutor? Is it not to make Arjuna do his duty to society as a Kshatriya prince? Is it not to make the world safe from tyranny and evil rule? As a matter of fact we know that Arjuna wanted to flee from the world and save his own soul in isolation from it. He wanted to retire from the field of battle and its conflict of duties, and seek refuge in religious mendicancy. But he was prevented from taking such a futile course by his charioteer and friend. And who is this charioteer and friend? Is He not Isvara Himself in human form, the purpose of whose incarnation, according to the Gita, is to set right the world when it goes wrong and to re-establish Dharma or the rule of righteousness?

The very concept of Dharma which is so characteristic of Hinduism is a standing refutation of the argument that Hindu spirituality is indifferent to social problems. Dharma is so called because it maintains the social order. Every Hindu is enjoined to be faithful to his own Svadharma so that the harmony of the society may be preserved. It has been well remarked that Dharma is the earthly counterpart of Moksha. If the latter is the kingdom of God, the former is the kingdom of God on earth. And, according to the Hindu view of

life which is embodied in the formula of Purusharthas, Dharma is the framework within which Artha (wealth) and Kama (desire) have to operate. In other words, we are free to acquire possessions and gratify our desires within the limits set by the moral law. Accordingly we have Artha-Sastra and Kama-Sastra, as well as Dharma-Sastra. In fact we have a Sastra for every department of secular knowledge. We have scientific treatises on fine arts, on medicine, on archery, on horsemanship, on the catching and training of elephants and so on. To accuse the culture of a nation which has produced all these secular Sastras and which has above all built up the edifice of Varna-asrama-dharma of being anti-social or other-worldly is only ridiculous.

We may go even a step further and say that the Hindu thinkers had a much wider conception of society and a more penetrating vision of the evolving universe than their critics. For society, according to them, includes not only living men but also those who have gone before them and those who will come after them, all beings above them like the gods and all beings below them like animals and plants. Through the ceremony of the five great sacrifices which a householder was enjoined to perform, they taught that a man owed a duty not only to his

neighbours but also to his ancestors, to his descendants and to all living beings higher and lower than himself. Thus they had a more organic conception of society than their critics of the present day. It will be seen that theirs was a conception which was not limited by space or time. Nor was it confined to mankind as the Christian conception is.

Again, they seem to have clearly seen that there was one universal purpose running through all creation—namely, the return of the divided Spirit to its original wholeness. To them the universe is one vast field where spirit is ever in conflict with matter, Atman with Anatman on various levels of being and with varying degrees of success. Their idea of the spiritual evolution of the world is well expressed in the Taittiriya-Upanishad in the conversation between Bhrigu and his father Varuna. From matter to life, from life to consciousness, from the consciousness of animals to the self-consciousness of man, and from the self-consciousness of man to the universal consciousness of God—the path of progress is discernible in the very structure of creation. Only with the appearance of man, who is a free agent, we have the beginnings of a *conscious* purpose, and consequently further progress is not automatic along a straight line,

but takes devious ways and has frequent back-slidings.

According to this vision of the universe, the Hindu thinkers looked upon all progress in human history as an aspect or a phase of the progress seen in the order of creation. That is, it has to be judged according to the degree of the conquest of spirit over matter. It has to be tested by a standard of spiritual values. Accordingly the question they ask is —‘How far has this particular age or nation or civilization progressed in the kingdom of God?’ Or, as they picturesquely put it, does the cow of Dharma walk on one leg or two legs or three legs or four legs? The writers of our Puranas saw in their day some of the back-slidings of the spirit and imagined that worse would follow, and accordingly they spoke of the four *yugas* or ages, placing the golden period of moral perfection in the remote past. One may question their facts. But their standards are unquestionable. The Hindu thinkers were never carried away by the material prosperity or the scientific skill or the power of organisation of the civilizations of their day. The contrast which Valmiki and Vyasa have drawn in their epics between the kingdom of Ravana and the kingdom of

Rama, between the rule of Duryodhana and the rule of Yudhishthira, shows what criteria they employed in judging of civilizations and what their judgment on modern European civilization would be.

It is interesting to observe that the Hindu thinkers and nation-builders tried to project the lines of progress that they discovered in the cosmic process and found reflected in human history into their own ideal scheme of society and their ideal pattern of individual life. According to them, in every ideal society or state those who develop the highest values of the spirit have to occupy the highest place and those who are blind to those values should occupy the lowest. The function of each class should depend upon the degree of its moral and spiritual development. It is more a question of elder and younger than of superior and inferior. The elder brother in a family has, no doubt, greater freedom, but he has also greater responsibilities and more onerous duties and is judged by more severe standards, while the younger ones lead a sheltered life and are affectionately taken care of and carefully educated. Apparently the dream of the Indian sages who organised the caste system was to make the whole nation a joint family embody-

ing the principle of spiritual progress. We all know how far that dream has come true. Unfortunately human materials could not be easily shaped according to an ideal pattern, there were more factors that determined the moral worth of a man than mere heredity or training, and, above all, India was not the world. Hence the complicated relations that existed in actuality between the various castes and the innumerable sub-castes could not be represented by a simple diagram of four horizontal straight lines any more than the complicated relations of the various dialects of Prakrit could be represented by a neat genealogical table. Nor, of course, as a matter of fact did the moral and spiritual development of men correspond always to their place in the social hierarchy. Nor, again, could an ideal system of society, conceived exclusively as part of one religion and in accordance with the conditions obtaining in one country and one epoch, maintain its ground for all time. The Indian caste system in its present form is bound to disappear, as the Holy Roman empire has disappeared, and as the theocracies of Israel and Islam have disappeared. But my point here is that the Hindu sages did conceive of a kingdom of God on earth, however inadequate or

unsatisfactory that conception might have been, that they did not teach people to run away from the world to save their own souls, but that on the contrary they denounced Buddhism as an anti-social heresy when it began to teach such a doctrine.

Again, in accordance with the increasing purpose which they discovered in Nature and in history and which they tried to enforce in the organisation of the society, they prescribed a graded discipline for the individual. The four *asramas* with their progressive freedom and emancipation of the spirit correspond to the four *varnas*, the four *yugas* and the four *puru-sharthas*. A man has to qualify himself duly for the final stage of untrammelled contemplative life by a strenuous life of action during which he has to discharge the debt he owes to society. And Sannyasa never meant a cessation of the activities which are calculated to do good to society. For instance, there could not be a greater sannyasin than Sankara, and yet there was not a greater man of action working for the good of the society during his age. He travelled all over the country at a time when travel was not at all easy or safe, taught incessantly, wrote his famous commentaries, tracked down heresies and organised mutts at the

vital centres of the land for the purpose of disseminating sound doctrine.

Thus the edifice of ancient Hindu civilization was all carved out of a single rock. The momentous discovery of the Upanishads that the human spirit is essentially divine and should be ultimately free is the inner sanctuary—the Garbha Griha—round which all the other apartments of ethics, politics, science and art were constructed. And all progress was progress from the outer to the inner. It was always measured in terms of the supremacy of spirit over matter, of knowledge over ignorance, of freedom over bondage.

I think, gentlemen, I have said enough to dispose of the false charge against Hinduism that it teaches only individual salvation and takes no thought of social progress. Let us now come to the teaching of the Gita. Probably we are now in a better position to understand its view of progress, as we have surveyed the background of tradition against which it is set. I have already said that the very form of the Gita and the context out of which it arose, apart from its contents, show that it is the well-being of society that the author had in his mind more than the well-being of the individual. Now if we glance at the contents



also from the standpoint of social ethics, we shall find that the Gita not only emphasises the importance of social well-being but also indicates the right lines of progress. The Karma-yoga that it advocates may be considered to have three aspects. For disinterested action may be looked upon, firstly, as a means to Atma-suddhi or self-purification.

The Gita says:—

“With the body, with the mind, with the understanding and with the senses alone, men of selfless actions do their work without attachment *for the purification of their souls.*” (V. 11.)

Secondly, it may be looked upon as the instrument of Lokasangraha or the maintenance of society.

“As ignorant men act from attachment to their work, O Arjuna, so too should an enlightened man act, but without any attachment, *so that he may maintain the order of the world.*” (III. 25.)

Thirdly, it may be looked upon as service to God:—

“Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou eatest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever thou givest away and whatsoever of austeri-

ties thou dost practise—do that as an offering to me.” (IX. 27.)

It should be remembered that it is in enforcing the second of these three points of view that the Gita cites the example of Isvara and mentions the unceasing activity of His divine providence in the world and thus makes an original and characteristic contribution to the whole subject. For the Bhagavan says:—

“There is nothing in the three worlds, O Arjuna, for me to achieve, nor is there anything to gain which I have not already. Yet I continue to work.

“For, if I did not continue to work unwearied, O Arjuna, men all around would follow my path.

“If I should cease to work, these worlds would perish, and I should cause confusion and destroy these people.” (III. 22-24.)

In fact, it is remarkable how the Gita even in its highest flights of description of the rapture of the saints never fails to mention the care for all creatures as an inalienable element in it. Take, for instance, the famous passage (VI. 19-28) describing Dhyana-yoga which begins with the verse:—

“As a lamp in a place sheltered from the wind doth not flicker—”. It describes the in-

tense concentration of the Yogin's mind on the Absolute and the infinite joy of union which he experiences. But it is immediately followed by the verse:—

“Steadfast in Yoga he sees himself in all beings and all beings in himself—he sees the same in all.” (VI. 29.)

And the whole section ends with the verse:—  
“He who looks upon all as himself in pleasure and in pain—he is considered, O Arjuna, as the perfect Yogin.”

Or take the three verses (V. 24-26) in the fifth chapter describing Brahma-Nirvana or the beatitude of God. The second of these runs thus:—

“Those whose sins are destroyed and whose doubts are removed, whose minds are disciplined and who are engaged in doing good to all beings—such holy men attain to the beatitude of God.”

Again, in chapter XII describing those who fix their minds, not on the personal Isvara, but on the impersonal and unqualified Brahman, the Teacher says:—

“But those who worship the imperishable, the ineffable, the unmanifested, the omnipresent, the incomprehensible, the unchanging and the eternal—

“Having subdued all their senses and being of even mind under all conditions and *engaged in the good of all beings*—they come to me indeed.” (XII. 3-4.)

And, lastly, in chapter XVI where men of evil nature are denounced in scathing terms, we find that the cause of the divine indignation partly is that the evil-doer not only destroys his own soul but also destroys the world-order. For the Bhagavan says:—

“Holding this view, these lost souls of small understanding who commit evil deeds come forth as enemies for the destruction of the world.” (XVI. 9.)

I need not labour the point any further. The whole message of the Gita is, as you all know, that a man should remain in the world but without any attachment to it and work there as the servant of God for the welfare of society as well as for the highest good of his own soul. Neither Karma-yoga nor Bhakti-yoga, nor Jnana-yoga, as taught in this scripture, is ever divested of the social aspect of spiritual life.

Then coming to the question of social progress, as distinct from social well-being, we have to ask ourselves—What is the attitude of the Gita? Does it look ahead? Or does it simply

look back? Does it look upon tradition as something wholly divine and hence unchangeable? Or does it look upon it as wholly human and hence totally dispensable? In a word, what is the path of progress according to the Gita?

Swami Vivekananda once said that the path of progress in India lay between the Scylla of old orthodoxy and the Charybdis of modern European civilization. You know that according to Greek mythology the former was a monster and the latter a whirlpool set in the narrow strait between Italy and Sicily, so that the sailors who tried to avoid the monster ran the risk of being engulfed in the whirlpool. Swami Vivekananda's complaint against what he called old orthodoxy was that it was not Hinduism but don't-touchism, that is, it worships its own cooking-pot as a god and erects impassable barriers between class and class, and sect and sect. He saw with a prophetic eye that the problem of untouchability was the most urgent problem facing modern India. And he was roused to fury at the attitude of some of the orthodox to this problem and their indifference to the dangers surrounding a disunited Hinduism. But the Swami also saw that the reformer who in his zeal for the

removal of untouchability and the establishment of social solidarity tried to get away from the monster of old orthodoxy was likely to fall into the whirlpool of modern European civilization, whose guiding principle according to him is insatiable greed. We at the present day are in a better position to see the appropriateness of the comparison of European civilization to a whirlpool. For, Europe is now in a whirlpool. The great war of 1914, the recent Italo-Abyssinian war, the civil war in Spain, the doings of men in high places in Russia and Germany have opened our eyes. We have now lost our admiration for European civilization which we had in the nineteenth century and are beginning to ask ourselves:—Why has this civilization come to this pass in spite of its Christianity, in spite of its code of chivalry and in spite of its humanitarian zeal and its ideals of social service? Swami Vivekananda would answer that it was because Western nations have made worldly happiness a primary thing and religion a secondary thing. When people come to think that material prosperity, colonial expansion and the capture of markets are more important than the conquest of the self and the deepening of the spirit, what else do you expect?

It is the other way about in India. With us religion no doubt is still a primary thing. But is it a live religion? Does it make for progress? Or is it only a blind ancestor-worship? It is interesting to note that Swami Vivekananda, when he compared our old orthodoxy to the monster Scylla and the modern European civilization to the whirlpool Charybdis, said that, if the choice lay between these two only, he would unhesitatingly prefer the former. For, the old orthodox man, in spite of his blindness and crudeness, is a man. He has faith, he has strength and he stands on his own legs. He is true to his national Svadharma. To him religion is primary and all else secondary, and so he is a true child of India. Only his religion is more a stagnant pool than a flowing stream. For he worships the letter of the law and kills the spirit. But on the other hand, the Europeanized Indian, according to Swami Vivekananda, is not a man. He is only a confused jumble of ideas. There is no organised unity about his mind. He glibly mouths a few catchwords and slavishly follows his European masters. He does not think for himself. The Swami points out that it is not by senseless borrowing, but by wise assimilation, that a nation could grow, especi-

ally, a nation with an immemorial tradition.

Gentlemen, I have dwelt at some length on the attitude of this great modern apostle of Hinduism to the problem of progress, because, in my opinion, it is substantially the same as that of the Gita. The Gita too has no patience with the old orthodox ritualists of its day, whose religion was little more than a mechanical observance of rites and ceremonies. Its language, you remember, is rather startling:—

“Fools who rejoice in the letter of the Veda say, ‘There is nothing else but this.’ Their souls are ridden with desires and they long for a Paradise. They quote florid texts that give out rebirth as the reward of rituals and lay down various ceremonies for the acquisition of wealth and power. Therefore, those that are attracted to pleasure and power are carried away by these words and have not the resolute will of a steadfast mind.” (II. 42-43.)

But the Gita denounces with greater indignation those who set aside the scriptures altogether and become a law unto themselves. To describe their ideology, it makes them think aloud in the sixteenth chapter in these words, which we might imagine a Hitler or a Mussolini as uttering:—



“ ‘This I have gained to-day, and that longing will I fulfill. This wealth is mine hereafter.

‘This foe I have slain and others too I will slay. I am the lord of all and I enjoy myself. I am prosperous, mighty and happy.

‘I am rich and of high birth. Who is there like unto me? I will perform sacrifices, I will give alms, I will rejoice.’ Thus are they deluded by ignorance.” (XVI. 13-15.)

And the whole passage ends with the two oft-quoted verses:—

“But he who discards the scriptural law and acts as his desires prompt him—he attains neither perfection, nor happiness nor the highest state.

“Therefore, let the scripture be thy authority in determining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. Knowing the scriptural law, thou shouldst do thy work in this world.” (XVI. 23-24.)

It is well known that the Gita is quoted both by the conservative and by the revolutionary. Its sacred verses are equally on the lips of those who are heading towards Scylla and of those who are heading towards Charybdis. Such a thing becomes possible only because the verses are torn by each party from their

context and are interpreted independently of the other verses and of the whole trend of the Gita. The contradiction between the verses quoted by those who advocate authority and by those who advocate freedom is only apparent. The Gita advises us to go to scriptures for guidance, but warns us against following the letter instead of the spirit. It includes the study of the Veda in its list of virtues, but says that the vision of God cannot be gained either by the study of the Veda or by penances or by gifts, but only by exclusive devotion to Him. In other words, it does justice both to the authority of religious tradition and to the inherent sovereignty of the soul. And this part of its teaching is obviously in a line with its general teaching. For the Gita teaches us that harsh asceticism is not the way to freedom from the thralldom of the flesh. It teaches us that hasty renunciation is not the way to freedom from the bonds of the world. Similarly, it teaches us here that arrogant non-conformity is not the way to freedom from the rule of tradition and custom. Freedom from the institutions of the past has to be gained in the same way as freedom from the flesh and freedom from the world—that is, by obedience and transcendence and not by

rebellion and non-conformity. And the divine author of the Gita teaches us that this is the right path of progress towards freedom, both by precept and example. For how has he himself dealt with the revelation of the Upanishads in his own gospel? He has not only absorbed it thoroughly but also extended its scope in such a way as practically to recreate it according to the needs of his age. If we follow his lead and understand the spirit of his message as a whole, I think we can avoid both the Scylla of old orthodoxy and the Charybdis of modern civilization.

Gentlemen, I have done. But, before we part, let us once more be clear in our minds as to what we mean by progress and what we think is the way to it according to the highest teaching of our scriptures and the noblest example of our teachers. With us progress is the process of the perfection of Dharma. And the perfection of Dharma implies both the perfection of the individual and the perfection of society. In fact, we cannot have the one without the other. They both act and react on each other. Therefore, we believe that nations and their civilizations have to be judged ultimately by the same standards as individuals and their characters. We cannot have one set

of values for the citizen and another set of values for the state. We cannot have one conscience for private life and another conscience for public life. If the progress of the individual is to be measured in spiritual terms, such as righteousness, truth, and beauty, the progress of nations also has to be measured in the same spiritual terms and not, as is usually done, in the lower biological terms of strength, vitality and appetite. Let us cling to this faith of ours all the more tenaciously at present when several nations seem to be going mad—mad with jealousy, mad with hatred and mad with greed. Let us remind ourselves that, as in Nature all progress is from the lower to the higher forms of life, so also in society all true progress is from the lower to the higher values of life. And again, as in Nature so also in society generally, the path of progress lies neither through the pool of stagnation nor through the whirlpool of revolution. And, above all, let us not forget that in the Bhagavad Gita we have a great world-scripture which, combining in a higher synthesis the passivism of the East and the activism of the West, has shown us the right kind of action which will lead individuals and nations along the eternal path of spiritual

progress. And the goal set before us is peace, harmony and the highest happiness, not only for the individual but also for humanity at large.

## APPENDIX I.

### GITA: THE UNIVERSAL MOTHER.

BY MAHATMA GANDHI

The following is the rendering into English of a Hindi speech that Gandhiji delivered at Benares to students:—

Early in my childhood I had felt the need of a Scripture that would serve me as an unfailing guide through the trials and temptations of life. The Vedas could not supply that need, if only because to learn them would require fifteen to sixteen years of hard study at a place like Kashi, for which I was not ready then. But the Gita, I had read somewhere, gave within the compass of its 700 verses the quintessence of all the Sastras and the Upanishads. That decided me. I learnt Sanskrit to enable me to read the Gita. To-day the Gita is not only my Bible or my Koran; it is more than that—it is my mother. I lost my earthly mother, who gave me birth long ago; but this eternal mother has completely filled her place by my side ever since. She has never changed, she has never failed me. When I am in difficulty or distress, I seek refuge in her bosom.

It is sometimes alleged against the Gita that it is too difficult a work for the man in the street. The criticism, I venture to submit, is ill-founded. The Gita enabled the late Lokamanya, out of his encyclopædic learning and study, to produce a monumental commentary. For him it was a store-house of profound truths to exercise his intellect upon. But that need not scare away a lay reader. If you find all the eighteen chapters too difficult to negotiate, make a careful study of the first three chapters only. They will give you in a nutshell what is propounded in greater detail and from different angles in the remaining fifteen chapters.

Even these three chapters can be further epitomised in a few verses that can be selected from these chapters. Add to this the fact that at three distinct places the Gita goes even further and exhorts us to leave all 'isms' and take refuge in the Lord alone, and it will be seen how baseless is the charge that the message of the Gita is too subtle or complicated for lay minds to understand.

The Gita is the universal mother. She turns away nobody. Her door is wide open to any one who knocks. A true votary of the Gita does not know what disappointment is. He ever dwells in perennial joy and peace that

passeth understanding. But that peace and joy come not to the sceptic or to him who is proud of his intellect or learning. It is reserved only for the humble in spirit who brings to her worship a fullness of faith and an undivided singleness of mind. There never was a man who worshipped her in that spirit and went back disappointed.

Our students are prone to be upset by trifles. A trivial thing like failure in an examination plunges them into the darkest despair. The Gita inculcates in them the duty of perseverance in the face of seeming failure. It teaches us that we have a right to actions only, but not to the fruit thereof, and that success and failure are one and the same thing at bottom. It calls upon us to dedicate ourselves, body, mind and soul, to pure duty, and not to become mental voluptuaries at the mercy of all chance desires and undisciplined impulses. As a 'Satyagrahi,' I can declare that the Gita is ever presenting me with fresh lessons. If somebody tells me that this is my delusion, my reply to him would be that I shall hug this delusion as my richest treasure.

I would advise the students to begin their day with an early morning recitation of the Gita. I am a lover and devotee of Tulasidas. I adore the great spirit that gave to an aching



world the all-healing 'mantra' of 'Rama-nama.' But I am here to-day, not to present Tulasidas to you, but to ask you to take up the study of the Gita, not in a carping or critical spirit, but in a devout and reverent spirit. Thus approached, she will grant you every wish. Once you have tasted of its sweet nectar, your attachment to it will grow from day to day. The recitation of the Gita verses will support you in your trials and console you in your distress, even in the darkness of solitary confinement. And if, with these verses on your lips, you receive the final summons and deliver up your spirit, you will attain Brahma-Nirvana—the Final Liberation. What that blessed state is—I leave it for your learned Acharyas to explain to you.

## II—GITA: THE CELESTIAL FRUIT.

*By Lokamanya Bala Gangadharā Tilak.*

In the literature of the whole world there is no book like the Gita. It is a most luminous and priceless gem. It gives peace to afflicted souls, it makes us masters of spiritual wisdom. In short, in all the languages of the world there is not a single book like the Gita which can acquaint us so well with the hidden truths of all the ages.

The Gita takes us to the supreme Bliss, and it makes no distinction of class, order, country, sex, creed or community. It bears the attitude of toleration towards other books of religion, and beautifully harmonises the philosophy of Action, Devotion and Knowledge. It can easily be said to be an immortal fruit of the tree of the Eternal Vedic Religion.

Those who are keen about the fundamentals of Hindu religion and polity must make it a point to go through this unsurpassed and wonderful book, because it clearly expounds the cardinal principles of Hindu religion.

When our Scriptures had finally thought over the problems of the perishable and the imperishable aspects of the world, and of the Field (Kshetra) and the Knower of the Field (Kshetragna) through the philosophy of Yoga, Sankhya, Nyaya, Mimamsa, and Vedanta, the Gita made a clear improvement in enunciating a philosophy of Karma based on Jnana and supported by Bhakti. Hence it can be said that even in Sanskrit literature there is not a single book which deals with all the principles and truths of Hindu Dharma in such a short yet exhaustive and unapproachable manner.

### III—GITA: THE TREASURE HOUSE OF DHARMA.

*By Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.*

I believe that in the whole history of mankind, the greatest outstanding personality having the deepest and the most profound knowledge and possessing superhuman powers is Sri Krishna. I further believe that in all the living languages of the world there is no book so full of truth-knowledge, and yet so handy, as the Bhagavad-Gita.

This wonderful book of eighteen small chapters contains the essence of the Vedas and the Upanishads and is a sure guide of the way to perfect happiness here as well as hereafter. It preaches the threefold way of Knowledge, Devotion and Action, leading to the highest knowledge, the purest love and the most luminous action. It teaches self-control, the threefold austerity, non-violence, truth, compassion, obedience to the call of duty for the sake of duty and putting up a fight against unrighteousness (Adharma).

Full of knowledge and truth and moral teaching, it has the power to raise men from the lowest depths of ignorance and suffering to the highest glories of divine beings. To my knowledge, there is no book in the whole range

of the world's literature so high above all as the Bhagavad Gita which is a treasure-house of Dharma, not only for the Hindus but for all mankind. Several scholars of different countries have, by a study of this book, acquired a pure and perfect knowledge of the Supreme Being and gained a stainless, desireless, supreme devotion to His feet. Those men and women are very fortunate who have got this little lamp of light full of an inexhaustible quantity of the oil of love, showing the way out of the darkness and ignorance of the world. It is incumbent on such people to use it for all mankind groping in darkness.

I sincerely wish and earnestly pray to God that I may live to hear the news that, from the richest mansion to the poorest cottage, every Hindu home is not without a copy of the Gita and that it is held in reverence by every Hindu with all the devotion due to a form of the Divine. I also wish to hear that satisfactory arrangements, backed by knowledge and devotion, as also by money, have been made to popularise the teaching of the Gita among all sects and classes of this country as well as other countries all over the world.

May this please my Lord Sri Krishna!

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# THE BHAGAVAD GITA

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## CHAPTER I.

*Dhritarashtra said:*

1. On Kurukshetra, the field of righteous war, when my people and the Pandavas had assembled together eager for the impending battle, what did they do, O Sanjaya?

2. When King Duryodhana saw the army of the Pandavas arrayed for battle, he drew near to his teacher and said these words:--

3. "Behold, O Teacher, this mighty army of the sons of Pandu, arrayed by thy skilful pupil, the son of Drupada.

4. "There are here great archers equal to Bhima and Arjuna in battle—Yuyudhana, Virata and Drupada, each a mighty warrior.

5. "The brave Dhrishtaketu, Chekitana, and the king of Kasi; Purujit and Kuntibhoja, and Saibya, the best of men;

6. "Yudhamanyu the strong and Uttama<sup>u</sup>ja the brave; and also the son of Subhadra and the sons of Draupadi, all of them great warriors.

7. "Mark also, O best of Brahmans, the leaders of my army, those who are most distinguished among us. I will name them now, that thou mayst know them.

8. "Thyself and Bhishma and Karna and Kripa, ever victorious in battle; Asvathama, Vikarna, and also the son of Somadatta;

9. "And many other heroes who have risked their lives for me, armed with many kinds of weapons and all well-skilled in war.

10. "Inadequate is this army of ours which is guarded by Bhishma, while adequate is that army of theirs which is guarded by Bhima.

11. "Therefore do ye all support Bhishma, standing firm in all fronts in your respective divisions."

12. In order to cheer him up the aged Kuru, his valiant grandsire, roared like a lion and blew his conch.

13. Then suddenly conches and kettledrums, tabors and drums and horns

blared forth; and the sound was tumultuous.

14. Then stationed in their great chariot, to which white horses were yoked, Krishna and Arjuna blew their celestial conchs.

15. Krishna blew his Panchajanya, and Arjuna his Devadatta; and Bhima of terrible deeds blew his huge conch, Paundra.

16. King Yudhishtira, son of Kunti, blew his Anantavijaya, and Nakula and Sahadeva blew their Sughosha and Manipushpaka.

17. And the king of Kasi, the chief of archers; Sikhandin, the great warrior; the invincible Satyaki; Drishtadyumna and Virata;

18. Drupada and the sons of Draupadi, O King, and the strong-armed son of Subhadra—on all sides blew their conchs.

19. The tumultuous uproar rent the hearts of Dhritarashtra's sons, for it made the earth and the heavens resound.

20. Then Arjuna, whose banner bore the crest of Hanuman, looked at the sons of Dhritarashtra drawn up in



battle; and, as the clash of weapons began, he took up his bow.

21. And, O King, he said these words to Krishna:

*Arjuna said:*

Draw up my chariot, O Krishna, between the two armies.

22. And I will look on these men standing eager for battle and see with whom I must contend in this strife of war.

23. I wish to observe those who are assembled here ready to fight and eager to please in battle the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra.

*Sanjaya said:*

24. Thus addressed by Arjuna, Krishna drew up that fine chariot, O Dhritarashtra, between the two armies.

25. In front of Bhishma, Drona and all the chiefs he said, "Behold, O Arjuna, these Kurus assembled here."

26. Then saw Arjuna standing there fathers and grandfathers, teachers, uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons and comrades;

27. And also fathers-in-law and bosom friends in both the armies. When Arjuna looked on all these kinsmen thus arrayed—

28. He was overcome with great compassion and said these words in sadness: —

*Arjuna said:*

When I see these, my kinsmen, drawn up and eager for fight, O Krishna,

29. My limbs give way, my mouth is parched, my body trembles, and my hair stands on end.

30. Gandiva slips from my hand and my skin burns all over. I am not able to stand, my mind seems to reel.

31. And I see adverse omens, O Krishna, nor do I expect any good in slaying my kinsmen in the fight.

32. I desire no victory, O Krishna, nor dominion, nor pleasures. Of what use is the kingdom to us, O Krishna, or enjoyment or even life?

33. Those for whose sake we desire kingship, delights and pleasures are arrayed here in battle, risking their lives and riches.

34. Teachers, fathers, sons and also grandfathers; uncles and grandsons, fathers-in-law and brothers-in-law and other kinsmen.

35. These I would not kill, though killed myself, O Krishna, even for the sovereignty of the three worlds, much less for this earth.

36. What joy can be ours, O Krishna, when we have slain the sons of Dhritarashtra? Only sin will take hold of us when we kill these evil-hearted men.

37. Therefore we must not slay our kinsmen, the sons of Dhritarashtra. For how can we be happy, if we kill our own kindred, O Krishna?

38. Even if they, whose minds are overpowered by greed, see no evil in the ruin of kinsmen, and no crime in treachery to friends,

39. Why should we not learn to turn away from this crime, O Krishna—we who see the sin of ruining a clan?

40. By the ruin of a clan its ancient laws perish; and when its laws perish, lawlessness prevails throughout the clan.

41. And when lawlessness prevails, O Krishna, the high-born women of the clan go astray; and when women go astray, there arises confusion of castes.

42. And this confusion leads into hell the clan itself as well as those who

have destroyed it. For the spirits of their ancestors fall, deprived of their offerings of water and rice.

43. By the misdeeds of those who destroy a clan and create confusion of castes, the immemorial laws of the clan and the caste are rooted out.

44. And we hear it said, O Krishna, that the men of the clans whose laws are rooted out needs must live in hell.

45. Alas! what a great sin we have resolved to commit in striving to slay our kinsmen through our greed for the pleasures of the kingdom!

46. Far better would it be for me if the sons of Dhritarashtra, weapons in hand, should slay me in the battle, while I remain unresisting and unarmed.

*Sanjaya said:*

47. Having spoken thus on the field of battle Arjuna sank down on the seat of his chariot and cast away his bow and arrow, his heart overwhelmed by grief.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita, the science of the Absolute, the scripture of Yoga, and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna this is the first chapter entitled:

## CHAPTER II

*Sanjaya said:*

1. He was thus overcome with pity, his eyes were filled with tears and became troubled, and he was much depressed. Then Krishna said these words:

*The Bhagavan said:*

2. Whence has this loathsome feeling come upon thee, O Arjuna, in this crisis? It is ignoble, it is disgraceful, it debars thee from heaven.

3. Do not yield to this weakness, O Arjuna, for it does not become thee. Shake off this base faintness of heart and arise, O dreaded hero!

*Arjuna said:*

4. How can I attack Bhishma and Drona in battle with my arrows, O avenging Krishna? Worthy of worship are they to me.

5. It is better indeed to live as a beggar in this world without slaying these venerable teachers. For, though they are mindful only of their gains, they are my teachers; and if I should slay them, all my joys even in this life would be stained with blood.

6. We do not know which of these two is better for us, nor do we know whether we shall conquer them or they will conquer us. The very men whom if we slew, we should not care to live, even they, the sons of Dhritarashtra, are arrayed against us.

7. My heart is stricken with the weakness of compassion; my mind is perplexed about my duty; and so I ask thee. Tell me for certain which is better. Teach me, for I am thy pupil and have taken refuge in thee.

8. Even if I should obtain the rich and unrivalled sovereignty of the earth and the lordship of the gods in heaven, I do not know what would drive away this grief that dries up my senses.  
*Sanjaya said:*

9. Having thus addressed Krishna, the mighty Arjuna said he would not fight and remained silent.

10. As he thus remained in grief, O Dhritarashtra, between the two armies, Krishna seemed to smile and spoke these words.

*The Bhagavan said:*

11. Thou weepest for those whom thou shouldst not weep for, and yet thou

speakest words that seem to be wise. Wise men weep neither for the dead nor for the living.

12. Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor thou, nor these kings of men. Never will there be a time hereafter when any of us shall cease to be.

13. As the soul in this body passes through childhood, youth and old age, even so does it pass to another body. A wise man is not deluded by this.

14. The senses in contact with their objects, O Arjuna, give rise to heat and cold, and pleasure and pain. They come and go, and do not last for ever. Endure them, O Arjuna.

15. The man who is not affected by these, O chief of men, and who remains the same in pleasure and pain, steadfast—he is fit for immortality.

16. The unreal never is, the Real never is not; the conclusion about these two is well perceived by seers of Truth.

17. Know that to be imperishable by which all this is pervaded. None can cause the destruction of this which is immutable.

18. Transient are said to be these bodies of the eternal soul which is

imperishable and incomprehensible. Therefore, fight, O Arjuna.

19. He who thinks it slays, and he who thinks it is slain—neither of them knows it well. It neither slays, nor is it slain.

20. It is never born, it never dies, nor, having once been, does it again cease to be. Unborn, eternal, permanent and primeval, it is not slain when the body is slain.

21. He who knows that it is imperishable and eternal, and that it has neither birth nor change—how can that man slay anyone, O Arjuna, or cause anyone to slay?

22. As a person casts off worn-out garments and puts on others that are new, so does the incarnate soul cast off worn-out bodies and enter into others that are new.

23. Weapons do not cleave him; fire does not burn him; water does not make him wet; nor does the wind make him dry.

24. He cannot be cloven, he cannot be burnt, he cannot be wetted, he cannot be dried. He is eternal, all-pervasive, un-



changing and immovable. He is the same for ever.

25. He is said to be unmanifest, inconceivable and unchanging. Therefore, knowing him as such, thou shouldst not grieve for him.

26. Even if thou holdest that he is frequently born and that he frequently dies—even then, O mighty Arjuna, thou shouldst not grieve.

27. For whatever is born is sure to die, and whatever dies is sure to be born again. Therefore, for what is inevitable thou shouldst not grieve.

28. Mysterious is the origin of beings, manifest their intermediate stage, O Arjuna, and mysterious again is their end. What is there for grief in this?

29. One looks upon him as a marvel, another likewise speaks of him as a marvel, another hears of him as a marvel; and, even after hearing, one never knows him.

30. The soul that dwells in the bodies of all, O Arjuna, can never be slain. Therefore thou shouldst not grieve for any creature.

31. Further, if thou shouldst regard thine own duty, thou shouldst not falter;

for to a Kshatriya there is no higher good than a righteous war.

32. Happy are the Kshatriyas, O Arjuna, who come by such a war that offers itself of its own accord as an open door to heaven.

33. But if thou wilt not wage this righteous war, thou wilt relinquish thy duty and thy honour, and wilt incur sin.

34. The world will ever speak of thy dishonour, and to a man who has been honoured, dishonour is worse than death.

35. The great warriors will think thou hast fled from battle through fear, and those that held thee in high esteem will make light of thee.

36. Many a vile word will thy enemies speak slandering thy strength. Could anything be more painful than that?

37. If thou fall, thou wilt go to heaven; if thou win, thou wilt enjoy the earth. Therefore, arise, O Arjuna, having made up thy mind to fight.

38. Pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat—treat them alike and gird thyself for fight. Thus thou wilt not incur sin.

39. This advice that has been given to thee is of the highest knowledge. Listen now to this of selfless conduct. If thou follow it, O Arjuna, thou wilt break through the bonds of action.

40. In this no effort is ever lost, and no harm is ever done. Even a little of this law will save a man from great fear.

41. In this the resolute mind has a single aim, O Arjuna; but the thoughts of the irresolute are manifold and endless.

42 & 43. Fools who rejoice in the letter of the Veda say, "There is nothing else but this." Their souls are ridden with desire, and they long for a Paradise; they quote florid texts that give out rebirth as the reward of rituals and lay down various rites for the acquisition of pleasure and power.

44. Therefore those that are attracted to pleasure and power are carried away by these words, and have not the resolute will of a steadfast mind.

45. The Vedas treat of Nature's three-fold disposition. But do thou transcend this, O Arjuna; be free from the pairs of opposites, be steadfast in purity, never care for possessions, but possess thy soul.

46. As is the use of a pond in a place flooded with water everywhere, so is that of all the Vedas to a Brahman who knows.

47. Work alone art thou entitled to, and not to its fruit. So never work for fruit, nor yet desist from work.

48. Work with an even mind, O Arjuna, having given up all attachment. Be of even mind in success and in failure. Evenness of mind is called Yoga.

49. Far inferior indeed is mere action, O Arjuna, to equanimity of mind. So take refuge in equanimity. Miserable are they who work for fruit.

50. A man of even mind puts away here both good and evil. Therefore strive for Yoga. Yoga is skill in action.

51. Sages of even mind, who give up the fruits of their actions, are freed from the bond of birth, and go to the place where no ills exist.

52. When thy mind has crossed the slough of delusion, thou wilt become indifferent to what has been learnt and also to what is yet to be learnt.

53. When thy mind, which is distracted by the Vedic texts, rests steadfast

and firm in spirit—then wilt thou gain true insight.

*Arjuna said:*

54. What is the mark of the man of steadfast wisdom, of steadfast spirit, O Krishna? How does the man of firm understanding speak, how does he sit, and how does he walk?

*The Bhagavan said:*

55. When a man puts away all the desires of his mind, O Arjuna, and when his spirit finds comfort in itself—then is he called a man of steadfast wisdom.

56. He who is not perturbed in mind by adversity and who has no eagerness amidst prosperity, he from whom desire, fear and anger have fallen away—he is called a sage of firm understanding.

57. He who has no attachments on any side, and who does not rejoice nor hate when he obtains good or evil—his wisdom is firmly set.

58. When a man withdraws his senses from their objects on every side, as a tortoise does its limbs, then is his wisdom firmly set.

59. The objects of senses fall away from the embodied soul when it ceases

to feed on them, but the taste for them is left behind. Even the taste falls away when the Supreme is seen.

60. Though a man may ever strive, O Arjuna, and be ever so wise, his senses will rebel and carry off his mind by force.

61. So he should control them all and remain steadfast and devoted to me; for he whose senses are under control—his wisdom is firmly set.

62. When a man dwells in his mind on the objects of sense, he feels an attachment for them. Attachment gives rise to desire, and desire breeds anger.

63. From anger comes delusion, from delusion the loss of recollection, from the loss of recollection the ruin of the understanding, and from the ruin of the understanding he perishes.

64. But a man of disciplined mind who moves among the objects of sense with his senses fully under his control, and free from love and hate—he attains to a clear vision.

65. And in that clear vision there is an end of all sorrow; for the man of clear vision soon acquires a serene comprehension.

66. When a man has no self-control, he can have no comprehension, nor can he have the power of contemplation. And without contemplation he can have no peace; and when he has no peace, how can he be happy?

67. When his mind runs after the roving senses, it carries off with it the understanding, as a gale carries away a ship upon the waters.

68. Therefore, O mighty Arjuna, he whose senses are all withdrawn from their objects—his wisdom is firmly set.

69. What is night for all beings is the time of waking for the disciplined soul; and what is the time of waking for all beings is night for the sage who sees.

70. The man into whom all desires enter as the waters enter into the sea, which, though ever filled, remains within its bounds—such a man attains to peace, and not he who hugs his desires.

71. The man who gives up all desires and goes about free from any longing, and bereft of the feeling of 'I' and 'mine'—he attains to peace.

72. This is a divine state, O Arjuna. He who has reached it is deluded no

longer, and he who is established in it even at the hour of death—he attains to the bliss of God.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita.....this is the second chapter entitled:

THE YOGA OF KNOWLEDGE.

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## CHAPTER III

*Arjuna said:*

1. If thou holdest that true insight is superior to works, why dost thou urge me to do this horrible work, O Krishna?

2. With such conflicting words methinks thou dost confuse my mind. Therefore tell me for certain that alone by which I could reach the highest good.

*The Bhagavan said:*

3. In this world a twofold way of life was taught of yore by me, O Arjuna, —that of knowledge for men of contemplation, and that of works for men of action.

4. No man can ever be free from a life of action by merely avoiding active



work; and no man can ever reach perfection through mere renunciation.

5. For no man can sit still even for a moment, but does some work. Everyone is driven to act, in spite of himself, by the impulses of Nature.

6. He who controls his organs of action, but continues to brood in his mind over the objects of sense—he deludes himself, and is termed a hypocrite.

7. But he who controls his senses along with the mind, O Arjuna, and directs his organs of action to work without attachment—he is indeed superior.

8. Do thou thy allotted work; for to work is better than to desist from work. By desisting from work thou canst not even sustain thy body.

9. This world is fettered by work unless it is done as a sacrifice. Therefore, O Arjuna, give up thy attachments and do thy work as a sacrifice.

10. In the beginning it is along with sacrifice that the Creator created men and said, “By this shall ye multiply, and this shall be the Cow which will yield unto you the milk of your desires.

11. "With this shall ye cherish the gods, and the gods shall cherish you. Thus cherishing one another ye will obtain the highest good.

12. "For cherished by sacrifice the gods will bestow on you the pleasures ye desire. He is verily a thief who enjoys the things they give without giving them anything in return."

13. The good men who eat what is left over after a sacrifice are freed from all sins. But the wicked who prepare food for their own sake—verily they eat sin.

14. From food are all creatures born; from rain is food produced; from the effects of sacrifice comes rain; and these effects spring from the acts of sacrifice.

15. Know that the acts of sacrifice are taught in the Veda, and that the Veda springs from God. Therefore the Veda, which comprehends all, ever centres round the sacrifice.

16. Thus was the wheel set in motion; and he who does not follow it, but takes delight in the senses and lives in sin—O Arjuna, he lives in vain.

17. But the man who rejoices in the Spirit, who is content and satisfied with the Spirit alone—he has nothing for which he should work.

18. He has nothing to gain by the things he has done or left undone in this world; nor has he to depend on any created being for any object of his.

19. Therefore always without attachment do the work thou hast to do, for a man who does his work without attachment wins the Supreme.

20. It is by works alone that men like Janaka became blest; and works thou shouldst do also with a view to the maintenance of the world.

21. Whatever a great man does, the same is done by others as well. He sets up a standard, and it is followed by the world.

22. There is nothing in the three worlds, O Arjuna, for me to achieve, nor is there anything to gain which I have not gained. Yet I continue to work.

23. For if I did not continue to work unwearied, O Arjuna, men all around would follow my path.

24. If I should cease to work, these worlds would perish: and I should cause confusion and destroy these people.

25. As ignorant men act from attachment to their work, O Arjuna, so too should an enlightened man act, but without any attachment, so that he may maintain the order of the world.

26. Let no enlightened man unsettle the minds of the ignorant who are attached to their work. Himself doing all works with faith he should make others do so as well.

27. All work is really done by the dispositions of Nature. But man, deluded by the feeling of self, thinks, "I am the doer."

28. But he who knows the truth of dispositions and actions and what is distinct from them, O Arjuna, holds himself aloof, thinking, "It is the organs of sense that are occupied with the objects of sense."

29. Those who are misled by the dispositions of Nature are attached to the works which those dispositions prompt. But let no man who knows the whole unsettle the minds of the ignorant who know only a part. .

30. Surrender all thy works to me and fight—with thy mind in unison with the Spirit and free from every desire and trace of self, and all thy passion spent.

31. Those who, full of faith, ever follow this teaching of mine and do not carp at it—they too are released from their works.

32. But those who carp at my teaching and do not act thereon—know that such senseless men, blind to all wisdom, are lost.

33. Even the man who knows acts in accordance with his own nature. All beings follow their nature; what can repression do?

34. Love and hatred are bound to arise towards the objects of each sense. But let no man come under the sway of these, for they are his enemies.

35. Better is one's own law, though imperfectly carried out, than the law of another carried out perfectly. Better is death in going by one's own law, the law of another brings fear in its train.

*Arjuna said:*

36. But what impels a man to commit sin, O Krishna, in spite of himself and

driven, as it were, by force?

*The Bhagvan said:*

37. It is desire, it is wrath, which springs from passion. Know that it is our enemy here, a monster of greed and sin.

38. As a flame is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror by dust, and as an unborn babe by the womb, so is this enveloped by that.

39. Enveloped is true knowledge, O Arjuna, by the insatiable fire of desire, which is the constant foe of the wise.

40. The senses, the mind and the understanding are said to be its seat. Through them it veils the knowledge and deludes the soul.

41. Therefore, O Arjuna, control thy senses from the beginning and slay this foul destroyer of knowledge and experience.

42. The senses are great, they say, the mind is greater than the senses, and the understanding greater than the mind; but what is greater than the understanding is He.

43. Therefore know Him who is higher than the understanding, control

the lower self by the higher Self, and kill the enemy, O Arjuna, who comes in the guise of desire, and who is hard to overcome.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita.....this is the third chapter entitled:

#### THE YOGA OF WORKS

### CHAPTER IV

*The Bhagavan said:*

1. I taught this eternal Yoga to Vivasvat, Vivasvat told it to Manu, and Manu told it to Ikshvaku.

2. Thus handed down from one to another the royal sages knew it. But through long lapse of time, O Arjuna, the doctrine was lost to the world.

3. This same ancient doctrine has to-day been taught to thee by me, for thou art my devotee and my friend. And it is a supreme secret.

*Arjuna said:*

4. Later was thy birth, and earlier the birth of Vivasvat. How, then am I to

understand that thou didst teach him in the beginning?

*The Bhagavan said:*

5. Many a birth have I passed through, O Arjuna, and so hast thou. I know them all, but thou knowest not thine.

6. Though I am unborn and my nature is eternal, and though I am the Lord of all creatures, I employ Nature which is ~~my~~ own, and take birth through my divine power.

7. Whenever there is a decline of Law, O Arjuna, and an outbreak of lawlessness I incarnate myself.

8. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of the Law I am born from age to age.

9. He who knows aright my divine birth and works will never be born again when he leaves his body, but will come to me, O Arjuna.

10. Freed from passion, fear and anger, absorbed in me, seeking refuge in me, and purified by the fire of knowledge many have become one with me.



11. Howsoever men approach me, even so do I accept them; for on all sides whatever path they may choose is mine, O Arjuna.

12. Those who desire the fruit of their works worship the gods here; for quickly in this world of men do such works bear fruit.

13. The four castes were created by me according to the division of aptitudes and works. Though I am their creator, know thou that I neither act nor change.

14. Works do not defile me; nor do I long for their fruit. He who knows me thus is not bound by his works.

15. Men of old who sought deliverance knew this and did their work. Therefore do thy work as the ancients did in former times.

16. What is work and what is no work—even the wise are perplexed here. I will tell thee what work is, so that thou mayst know and be freed from evil.

17. One has to understand what work really is, and likewise what is wrong work and also what is no work. Hard to understand is the way of work.

18. He who sees no work in work, and work in no work, he is wise among men,

he is a Yogin, and he has accomplished all his work.

19. He whose undertakings are all free from desire and self-will, and whose works are burnt up by the fire of knowledge—him the wise men call a sage.

20. Giving up attachment to the fruit of works, always satisfied, and depending on none, he is ever engaged in work—and yet he does no work at all.

21. Having no desires, bringing his mind and self under control, and giving up all possessions he commits no sin, his work being of the body alone.

22. Satisfied with whatever he gets, rising above both pleasure and pain, having no ill-will, and remaining the same in success and failure he acts indeed, but he is not bound.

23. The works of a man whose attachments are gone, who is free, and whose mind is well established in knowledge, melt away entirely, being done as for a sacrifice.

24. To him the offering is God, the oblation is God; and it is God that offers it in the fire of God. Thus does he realise

God in his works, and he reaches Him alone.

25. Some Yogins offer sacrifices to the gods, while others offer sacrifice in the fire of God, even in the manner of a sacrifice.

26. Some offer as sacrifice their hearing and other senses in the fires of restraint; while others offer sound and other objects of sense in the fires of their senses.

27. Some again offer the works of their senses and their life-breaths as sacrifice in the fire of self-control kindled by knowledge.

28. Some likewise offer as sacrifice their riches or their austerities or their practices; while others of subdued minds and severe vows offer their learning and their knowledge.

29. Some again, who are bent on regulating their breath, sacrifice the outward breath in the inward, or the inward breath in the outward, or stop the passage of both the inward and the outward.

30. While others, restricting their food, sacrifice their life-breaths in their life-breaths. All these know what sacrifice means, and by sacrifice are their sins destroyed.

31. Those who eat the sacred food that remains after a sacrifice go to the eternal Absolute. This world is not for him who makes no sacrifice, O Arjuna, much less the other.

32. Thus many kinds of sacrifice are set forth as the means of reaching the Absolute. And they all spring from active work. Know them as such, and thou shalt be free.

33. Knowledge as a sacrifice is superior to all material sacrifices, O Arjuna. For all works with no exception culminate in knowledge.

34. Learn this by humble reverence, by enquiry and by service. The wise who have seen the truth will teach thee this divine knowledge.

35. When thou hast known it, thou wilt nor err again as now, O Arjuna; for thou wilt see all things without exception in thyself and also in me.

36. Even if thou art the most sinful of sinners, thou wilt cross over all transgression by the raft of divine knowledge.

37. As the fire which is kindled reduces all fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, so does

the fire of knowledge reduce all works to ashes.

38. There is no purifier on earth equal to divine knowledge. A man who becomes perfect in Yoga finds it in himself in course of time.

39. He who is full of faith and zeal and who has subdued his senses obtains divine knowledge; and when he has obtained it, he soon gains supreme peace.

40. But the man who is ignorant and has no faith and who always doubts goes to ruin. There is neither this world nor the world beyond nor happiness for the man who always doubts.

41. Works do not bind the man, O Arjuna, whom Yoga prompts to selfless action and whose doubts are destroyed by divine knowledge and who ever possesses his soul.

42. Therefore having cut asunder with the sword of knowledge this doubt in thy heart which is born of ignorance, betake thyself to Yoga and arise, O Arjuna.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita.....this is the fourth chapter entitled: ‘

THE YOGA OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

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## CHAPTER V

*Arjuna said:*

1. Thou praisest O Krishna, the renunciation of works and also their selfless performance. Tell me for certain which is the better of the two.

*The Bhagavān said:*

2. The renunciation of works and their selfless performance both lead to bliss. But of the two the performance of works is better than their renunciation.

3. He who neither hates nor desires should be known as one who has ever the spirit of renunciation; for he who is above such contraries, O mighty Arjuna, is easily freed from bondage.

4. It is the simple and not the wise that speak of works and their renunciation as diverse ways. He who is firmly set on one reaches the end of both.

5. The place which is reached by men of renunciation is reached by men of action also. He who sees that the way of renunciation and the way of works are one—he sees indeed.

6. But to achieve renunciation is hard, O mighty Arjuna, for one who is not trained in selfless action; while the sage who is trained in selfless action reaches the Absolute in no long time.

7. He who is trained in selfless action and is pure in soul, who has conquered himself and subdued his senses, his self being the Self of all creatures, he is undefiled, though he works.

8. "I do nothing at all," thinks the man of selfless action knowing the truth; for in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, walking, breathing and sleeping;

9. In speaking, in emitting and grasping, in opening and closing his eyes, he is convinced that it is the senses that are occupied with the objects of sense.

10. He who works without attachments, resigning his actions to God, is untouched by sin, as a lotus leaf by water.

11. With the body, with the mind, with the understanding and with the senses alone, men of selfless actions do their work without attachment for the purification of their souls.

12. A selfless man who has renounced the fruit of his actions attains to a dis-

ciplined peace of mind. But the man who is not selfless is impelled by desire and is attached to the fruit, and is therefore bound.

13. The soul which has renounced all works with a discerning mind dwells at ease, self-subdued in the city of nine gates, neither working nor causing work to be done.

14. The sovereign soul neither works in the world nor causes anyone to work. Nor does it connect works with their fruits. It is Nature that works.

15. Nor does the all-pervading Spirit take on the sin or the merit of any. Knowledge is veiled by ignorance, and mortals are thereby deluded.

16. But for those in whom this ignorance is dispelled by knowledge, the knowledge illumines the Supreme like the sun.

17. Thinking of Him, at one with Him, abiding in Him, and delighting solely in Him, they reach a state from which there is no return, their sins being dispelled by their knowledge.

18. Sages look upon all alike—whether it be a learned and lowly Brahman or a cow or an elephant or even a dog or an outcaste.



19. Those whose minds are thus set on equality have even here overcome their being. God is pure, and is the same in all, therefore are they established in God.

20. He who knows God and is established in Him, he who is undeluded and is firm of mind—he neither joys at what is pleasant, nor is vexed at what is unpleasant.

21. His soul being unattached to external objects, he finds the happiness that is in himself; he is in union with God, and he enjoys undying bliss.

22. For the pleasures that arise from attachments are only sources of pain. They have a beginning and an end, O Arjuna, and no wise man delights in them.

23. He who is able to resist the force of desire and anger even here before he quits his body—he is a Yogin, he is a blessed man.

24. The Yogin who is happy within, who rejoices within, and who is illumined within becomes divine, and attains to the beatitude of God.

25. Those whose sins are destroyed and whose doubts are removed, whose

minds are disciplined and who rejoice in the good of all beings—such holy men attain to the beatitude of God.

26. Those who are free from desire and anger, and who have subdued their minds and realised themselves—around such austere men lies the beatitude of God.

27 & 28. Shutting out all external objects, fixing the gaze of his eyes between his brows, and equalising the inward and the outward breath moving in his nostrils, the sage who has controlled his senses, mind, understanding, and who has put away desire, fear and anger, and who is ever bent on liberation—he is indeed ever liberated.

29. And having known me who am the Recipient of all sacrifices and austerities, the Lord of all the worlds and the Friend of all creatures, he attains peace.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita.....this is the fifth chapter entitled:

THE YOGA OF RENUNCIATION.

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## CHAPTER VI

*The Bhagavan said:*

1. He who does the work he ought to do, and does not seek its fruit—he is a Sannyasin, and he is a Yogin, not he who does no work and maintains no sacred fires.

2. Know that what they call renunciation is the same as Yoga, O Arjuna, for no one who has not renounced his desire can ever become a Yogin.

3. Work is said to be the means of a sage who wants to attain to Yoga; but when he has attained to Yoga, serenity is said to be his means.

4. When a man has no attachment to the objects of sense nor to works, and when he has wholly renounced his will, he is said to have attained to Yoga.

5. Let a man raise himself by his own self, let him not debase himself. For he himself is his friend, and he himself is his foe.

6. He who has conquered himself is the friend of himself; but he who has not conquered himself is hostile to himself as a foe.

7. The spirit of a man who has conquered himself and attained to serenity is steadfast in cold and heat, in pleasure and pain, and in honour and dishonour.

8. He is said to be a steadfast Yogin whose mind derives satisfaction from knowledge and experience and who, having conquered his senses, never vacillates, and to whom a clod, a stone and a piece of gold are the same.

9. He who has equal regard for friends, companions and foes, for those that are indifferent, for those that are impartial, for those that are hateful, for those that are related, and even for those that are righteous and those that are sinful—he stands supreme.

10. A Yogin should always try to concentrate his mind in solitude, having retired to a secret place and subdued his mind and body and got rid of his desires and possessions.

11 & 12. Having in a clean place firmly fixed his seat, neither too high nor too low, and having spread over it the sacred grass, and then a deerskin, and then a cloth, he should practise Yoga for his own purification, restraining his thoughts

and senses, and bringing his mind to a point.

13. Sitting firm he should hold his body, head and neck erect and still, and gaze steadily on the point of his nose, without looking around.

14. Serene and fearless, steadfast in the vow of celibacy, and subdued in mind, he should sit in Yoga, thinking on me and intent on me alone.

15. Keeping himself ever steadfast in this manner, the Yogin of subdued mind attains to the peace which abides in me, and which leads on to bliss.

16. Yoga is not for him who eats too much, nor for him who eats too little. It is not for him, O Arjuna, who sleeps too much, nor for him who keeps vigil too long.

17. But for the man who is temperate in his food and recreation, who is restrained in all his actions, and who has regulated his sleep and vigils, Yoga puts an end to all sorrows.

18. When the disciplined mind of a man is established in the Spirit alone, free from the desire of any object—then is he said to possess concentration.

19. 'As a lamp in a place sheltered from the wind does not flicker'—that is the figure employed of a Yogin who, with a subdued mind, practises concentration of the Spirit.

20. That in which the mind is at rest controlled by the practice of concentration, that in which he beholds the Spirit through the mind and rejoices in the Spirit;

21. That in which he knows the boundless joy beyond the reach of the senses and grasped only by the understanding, and that in which, when he is established, he never departs from truth;

22. That on gaining which he feels there is no greater gain, and that in which he abides and is not moved even by the heaviest of afflictions—

23. Let that be known as Yoga. It is severance indeed of contact with pain, and it is to be practised with determination and an untiring mind.

24 & 25. Renouncing entirely all the desires born of the imagination, and restraining with his mind all his senses on every side, a man should gain tranquility little by little; and with a steadfast pur-

pose concentrate his mind on the Spirit, and think of nothing else.

26. Whatsoever makes the wavering and fickle mind wander away—it should be withdrawn from that and brought back to the control of the Spirit.

27. For supreme happiness comes to the Yogin whose mind is at rest, whose passions are composed, and who is pure and has become one with God.

28. Thus making the soul ever steadfast, the Yogin whose sins have disappeared easily experiences the infinite joy of union with God.

29. Steadfast in Yoga he sees himself in all beings, and all beings in himself—he sees the same in all.

30. He who sees me everywhere and sees everything in me—I am never lost to him, and he is never lost to me.

31. The Yogin who, having attained to oneness, worships me abiding in all beings—he lives in me, howsoever he leads his life.

32. He who looks upon all as himself, in pleasure or in pain—he is considered, O Arjuna, a perfect Yogin.

*Arjuna said:*

33. This Yoga which thou hast declared to be evenness of mind, Krishna,—I do not see any steadiness for it because of fickleness.

34. For the mind is fickle, O Krishna, it is violent, powerful and obstinate. To control it is as difficult, it seems to me, as to control the wind.

*The Bhagavān said:*

35. Doubtless the mind is fickle and hard to curb, O mighty Arjuna, but by constant practice and by detachment it can be controlled.

36. Yoga is hard to achieve, I agree, by a man who cannot control himself. But it can be achieved by a man who has controlled himself and who strives through proper means.

*Arjuna said:*

37. A man who has faith, but who is not steadfast, and whose mind has fallen away from Yoga, having failed to accomplish it—what way does he go, O Krishna?

38. Does he not perish like a riven cloud, O Krishna, fallen from both, and without any hold, and bewildered in the way that leads to God?



39. Thou shouldst dispel this doubt of mine completely, O Krishna, for no one is better fitted than thyself to dispel such a doubt.

*The Bhagavan said:*

40. Neither in this world nor in the next will he perish, O Arjuna. For a man who does good, my son, will never come to grief.

41. The man who has fallen away from Yoga goes to the regions of the righteous. Having lived there for unnumbered years, he is reborn in the house of the pure and prosperous.

42. Or he is born in a family of Yogins rich in wisdom. But a birth like this is hard to gain in this world.

43. There he regains the understanding acquired in his former body, O Arjuna, and strives still further for perfection.

44. By his former habit he is led on in spite of himself. Even a man who merely desires to know of Yoga transcends the Vedic rule of works.

45. But, if a Yogin strives with diligence, he is cleansed of all his sins; and becoming perfect through many births he reaches the supreme state.

46. A Yogin is greater than a man of austerities, he is considered greater than even a man of knowledge, and greater also than a man devoted to works. Therefore do thou become a Yogin, O Arjuna.

47. And of all Yogins he who worships me with faith, his inmost self dwelling in me—he is considered by me to be the most attuned.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita.....this is the sixth chapter entitled:

#### THE YOGA OF MEDITATION

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### CHAPTER VII

*The Bhagavan said:*

1. Hear thou, O Arjuna, how by fixing thy mind on me and taking refuge in me and practising Yoga, thou mayst without any doubt know me in full.

2. I will set forth to thee in full both knowledge and experience, which when thou hast learnt, nothing more remains for thee to know.

3. Among thousands of men scarcely one strives for perfection; and of those who strive and succeed scarcely one knows me in truth.

4. Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, understanding and self-consciousness—such is the eight-fold division of my nature.

5. This is my lower nature. My other and higher nature—know that to be the immanent spirit, O Arjuna, by which the universe is sustained.

6. And know that all beings have their birth in these. I am the origin of all this world and its dissolution as well.

7. There is nothing whatever that is higher than I am, O Arjuna; all this is strung on me as rows of gems on a string.

8. I am the taste in the waters, O Arjuna; I am the light in the sun and the moon. I am the syllable OM in all the Vedas; I am the sound in ether, and manliness in men.

9. I am the pure fragrance in the earth, and brightness in the fire. I am the life in all creatures, and the austerity in ascetics.

10. Know me to be the primeval seed, O Arjuna, of all things that are. I am the wisdom of the wise, and I am the glory of the glorious.

11. I am the strength of the strong, free from desire and passion. And I am the desire in all creatures, O Arjuna, which is not in conflict with the law.

12. And whatever things there may be—good, passionate or dull of nature—know thou they are all from me. I am not, however, in them; they are in me.

13. Deluded by these three-fold dispositions of Nature this world does not know me, who am above them and eternal.

14. This divine spell of mine consisting in the dispositions of Nature is hard to overcome. But those who take refuge in me shall overcome the spell.

15. The wicked and the foolish do not worship me, nor those that are vile whose minds are carried away by illusion and who partake of the nature of demons.

16. Four types of righteous men worship me, O Arjuna—the man in distress, the man who wishes to learn, the man who wants to realise the Truth and the man who realises.

17. Of these the man of realisation who has his devotion centred in One and who is ever attuned is the best. For supremely dear am I to the man of realisation, and he is dear to me.

18. Great indeed are all of them. But the man of realisation—I deem him to be myself. For being perfectly poised in mind, he resorts to me alone as the highest way.

19. At the end of many births the man of realisation seeks refuge in me recognising that Vasudeva is all. It is hard indeed to meet with such a high-souled person.

20. But those whose judgments are swayed by various desires resort to other gods, being overpowered by their own natures and observing diverse rituals.

21. Whatever may be the form which each devotee seeks to worship with faith—in that form alone do I make his faith steadfast.

22. Possessed of the faith he worships that form, and his desires are fulfilled, granted in fact by me alone.

23. But finite is the result gained by these men of small minds. Those who

sacrifice to the gods go to the gods, those who worship me come to me.

24. Not knowing my supreme nature<sup>•</sup> immutable and transcendental, foolish men think that I, the unmanifest, am endowed with a manifest form.

25. Veiled by my divine power I am not revealed to all. This deluded world knows me not as the unborn and eternal.

26. I know the beings that are past, that are present and that are to come, O Arjuna. But not one of them knows me.

27. Deluded are all beings born, O Arjuna, bewitched by the pairs that spring from love and hate.

28. But righteous men in whom sin has come to an end—they are free from the delusion of the pairs and worship me, steadfast in their vows.

29. Those who take refuge in me and strive for deliverance from old age and death—they shall know the Absolute, they shall know all about the soul, and all about works as well.

30. Those who know me as the One that underlies all elements, that underlies all gods and that underlies all sacrifices—

steadfast in mind they will know me even at the hour of death.

\* In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita.....this is the seventh chapter entitled:

#### THE YOGA OF EXPERIENCE.

### CHAPTER VIII

*Arjuna said:*

1. What is the Absolute? What is the Soul? And what is 'Work', O Krishna? What is it that is said to underlie all created things? And what is it that is said to underlie all the gods?

2. And who underlies all sacrifices here in the body, O Krishna, and how? And how, again, art Thou to be known at the time of death by those who have disciplined themselves?

*The Bhagavan said:*

3. The Absolute is the Imperishable the Supreme. His indwelling phase is the Soul, and the creative force that

brings beings into existence is called 'Work.'

4. That which underlies all created things is the perishable Nature. And that which underlies all the gods is the Cosmic Soul and He who underlies all sacrifices is myself, here in the body, O best of men.

5. And whoso, at the time of death, leaves his body thinking on me alone and passes away—he becomes one with me. Of this there is no doubt.

6. For whatever object a man thinks of at the last moment when he leaves his body—the same does he reach, O Arjuna, being ever absorbed in the thought thereof.

7. Therefore at all times think on me and fight. When thy mind and understanding are fixed on me, thou shalt doubtless come to me.

8. He who thinks on God the Supreme with a mind that is engaged in constant meditation and that never strays towards anything else—he reaches Him, O Arjuna.

9. He who meditates on the omniscient and primal Being, the Ruler, the Dispenser of all, who is subtler than the



subtle, whose form is beyond comprehension, and who, glorious as the sun, is beyond all darkness—

10. He who does so at the time of his passing away, with a steady mind and devotion and strength of Yoga, and with his vital breath fixed between his brows—he reaches God the Supreme.

11. I will now briefly describe to thee that state which those who know the Veda call the Imperishable, and upon which ascetics enter when they are free from attachments, and desiring<sup>c</sup> which they lead a life of abstinence.

12 & 13. Closing all the gateways of the body and confining the mind within the heart, and drawing up the life-breath into the head, whoso, thus engaged in constant concentration, utters OM, the single syllable denoting Brahman, and meditates on me as he departs—he goes to the highest state when he quits his body.

14. He who constantly meditates on me, and gives no thought to anything else—to him, who is a Yogin ever attuned, I am easy of access, O Arjuna.

15. Having come to me, these high-souled men are never again subject to

rebirth, which is sorrowful and impermanent, for they have reached the highest perfection.

16. From the realm of Brahma downwards all worlds are subject to rebirth, O Arjuna, but on reaching me there is no return to birth again.

17. Those who know that the day of Brahma lasts a thousand ages, and that the night of Brahma lasts a thousand ages again—they are indeed the men who know day and night.

18. At the approach of day all manifest things come forth from the unmanifested, and at the approach of night they merge again in the same which is called the unmanifested.

19. All this multitude of beings coming forth again and again needs must merge at the approach of night, O Arjuna, and come forth again at the approach of day.

20. But beyond this unmanifested there is yet another unmanifested, eternal Being, who does not perish when all beings perish.

21. This unmanifested is called the Imperishable. It is said to be the ultimate

goal. Those who reach it never come back. That is my supreme abode.

22. That Supreme Being in whom all things abide, and by whom all this is pervaded can be reached, O Arjuna, by exclusive devotion.

23. Now I will tell thee, O Arjuna, the time in which Yogins depart never to return, and also the time in which they depart only to return.

24. Fire, light, day-time, the bright half of the month, the six months of the northward course of the sun—taking this path, those who know the Absolute go to the Absolute.

25. Smoke, night, the dark half of the month, and the six months of the southward course of the sun—taking this path, the Yogin reaches the lunar light and thence returns.

26. These two ways—the bright and the dark—are deemed the world's eternal ways. By the former one goes never to return, by the latter one returns again.

27. No Yogin who understands these two paths is ever deluded. Therefore at all times, O Arjuna, be thou steadfast in Yoga.

28. The Yogin who knows this transcends the rewards prescribed for the study of the Vedas, for sacrifices, for penances, and for almsgiving, and reaches the supreme and primal state.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita.....this is the eighth chapter entitled:

THE YOGA OF THE IMPERISHABLE ABSOLUTE

## CHAPTER IX

*The Bhagavan said:*

1. As thou dost not cavil, I will expound to thee this profound secret of knowledge and experience, by understanding which thou wilt be released from evil.

2. It is a sovereign science, a sovereign secret, a supreme sanctity. It is perceived by direct experience; it accords with the law; it is easy to practise; and it is eternal.

3. Men who have no faith in this doctrine do not come to me, O Arjuna, but return to the path of death and birth.

4. This universe is everywhere pervaded by me, in an unmanifested form. All beings abide in me, but I do not abide in them.

5. And yet the beings do not abide in me, behold, that is my divine mystery. My spirit, which is the source of all beings, sustains all things, but it does not abide in them.

6. As the mighty wind blowing everywhere ever abides in ethereal space, know thou that in the same manner all beings abide in me.

7. At the end of a cycle all beings pass into Nature which is my own, O Arjuna, and at the beginning of a cycle I generate them again.

8. Controlling Nature which is my own, I send forth again and again all this multitude of beings, which are helpless under the sway of Nature.

9. And these works do not bind me, O Arjuna, for I remain unattached in the midst of my works like one unconcerned.

10. Under my guidance Nature gives birth to all things—those that move and those that do not move; and by this means, O Arjuna, the world revolves.

11. Fools disregard me when I assume a human form, not knowing my higher nature as the supreme Lord of all beings.

12. Being of the deceptive nature of fiends and demons, they are full of vain hopes, vain works and vain knowledge, and are devoid of judgment.

13. But high-souled men, O Arjuna, who partake of the divine nature, worship me with a mind undistracted, knowing that I am the Imperishable and that I am the source of all beings.

14. Ever glorifying me, and strenuous and steadfast in their vows, they bow before me and worship me with a constant love and devotion.

15. Others again make an offering of their knowledge, and worship me as the One, as the Distinct, and as the Manifold in various forms.

16. I am the sacrifice, I am the worship, I am the ancestral oblation, and I am the herb. I am the hymn, I am also the melted butter; I am the fire, and I am the offering.

17. I am the father of this universe, the mother, the supporter and the grand-sire. I am the Holy One to be known.

I am the syllable 'OM'; and I am the Rik, the Saman and the Yajus as well.

18. I am the goal and the support; the lord and the witness; the abode, the refuge and the friend. I am the origin and the dissolution; the ground, the treasure-house and the imperishable seed.

19. I give heat, I hold back and send forth the rain. I am the life everlasting, O Arjuna, as well as death. I am the being as well as the non-being.

20. Those who know the Vedās and drink the soma juice and are purified from sin, worship me with sacrifices and pray for the way to heaven. They reach the holy world of Indra and enjoy in heaven the celestial pleasures of the gods.

21. Having enjoyed the spacious world of heaven, they return to the world of mortals when their merit is exhausted. Thus following the ritual enjoined in the three Vedas and desirous of pleasures, they are subject to death and rebirth.

22. But those who meditate on me and worship me and no other, and who are ever devoted to me—to them I ensure the power to gain the new and preserve the old.

23. Even those who worship the other gods and are endowed with faith, worship me alone, O Arjuna, though in a wrong way.

24. For I am the enjoyer and the lord of all sacrifices. But these men do not know my real nature, and hence they fall.

25. Those who worship the gods go to the gods, those who worship the manes go to the manes, those who worship the spirits go to the spirits, and those who worship me come to me.

26. Whosoever devoutly offers to me a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water—of that man who is pure of heart I accept the pious offering.

27. Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou eatest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever thou givest away and whatsoever of austerities thou dost practise—do that as an offering to me.

28. Thus shalt thou be free from the bonds of works which bear good or evil fruits. With thy mind firmly set on the way of renunciation thou shalt become free and come to me.

29. I am the same in all beings, there is none hateful to me nor dear.



But those who worship me with devotion they are in me, and I too am in them.

30. Even if the most sinful man worships me, and worships no other, he must be regarded as righteous for he has decided aright.

31. He soon becomes righteous and obtains lasting peace. Proclaim it boldly, O Arjuna, that my devotee never perishes.

32. For those who take refuge in me, O Arjuna, though they are of the womb of sin—women, Vaisyas and Sudras—even they attain to the highest state.

33. How much more then if they are holy Brahmanas and pious royal saints? Having come into this fleeting and unhappy world do thou worship me.

34. Fix thy mind on me, be devoted to me, worship me and bow down before me. Having thus disciplined thyself and regarding me as thy supreme object, thou shalt come to me.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita.....this is the ninth chapter entitled:

THE YOGA OF SOVEREIGN SCIENCE AND  
SOVEREIGN MYSTERY

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## CHAPTER X

*The Bhagavan said:*

1. Once again, O mighty Arjuna, listen to my supreme word. From a desire to do thee good I will speak it to thy increasing delight.

2. Neither the hosts of gods nor the great sages know my origin, for I am the source of all the gods and all the sages.

3. He who knows that I am unborn and without a beginning and also that I am the mighty Lord of the world—he among mortals is undeluded, and is freed from all sins.

4 & 5. Intelligence, knowledge, sanity, patience, truth, self-control, and calmness; pleasure and pain, being and non-being, fear and fearlessness; non-violence, equanimity, contentment, austerity, alms-giving, fame and obloquy—these different attributes of beings arise but from me.

6. The seven great sages of old and the four Manus partook of my nature, and were born of my mind, and from them have sprung all these creatures in the world.

7. He who knows in truth this grandeur and power of mine shall come to possess unfailing devotion. Of this there is no doubt.

8. I am the origin of all; from me proceed all things. The wise know this and worship me with all their heart.

9. Their minds are fixed on me, their lives rest in me, and of me they ever converse enlightening one another. Thus are they delighted and satisfied.

10. On those that are ever devoted to me and worship me in love I bestow the understanding by which they come to me.

11. Out of compassion for them do I dwell in their hearts and dispel the darkness born of ignorance by the shining lamp of wisdom.

*Arjuna said:*

12 & 13. Thou art the supreme God, the supreme abode and the supreme holiness. All the sages proclaim Thee as the eternal and divine Person, as the first of the gods, as the unborn and omnipresent. So said the divine sage Narada, and also Asita, Devala and Vyasa, and Thou Thyself sayest this to me.

14. I believe as true all this which Thou sayest to me, O Krishna, for neither the gods nor the demons, O Lord, know Thy manifestation.

15. Thou alone knowest Thyself through Thyself, O Supreme Person, Creator of all things, Lord of creatures, God of gods, Ruler of the world.

16. Thou shouldst tell me of all Thy divine forms—whereby permeating these worlds, Thou dost abide in them.

17. How may I know Thee, O Yogin, by constant meditation? In what various aspects, O Lord, art Thou to be contemplated by me?

18. Speak to me again in full, O Lord, of Thy power and Thy grandeur; for I am not satiated with hearing Thy delicious speech.

*The Bhagavan said:*

19. Behold, I will tell thee of my divine forms—of only those that are prominent, O Arjuna; for there is no limit to my extent.

20. I am the soul, O Arjuna, seated in the hearts of all creatures. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all beings.

21. Of the Adityas I am Vishnu, of lights I am the radiant sun. I am Marichi of the Maruts, and among the stars I am the moon.

22. Of the Vedas I am the Saman, and of the gods I am Indra. Of the senses I am the mind, and in living beings I am the intellect.

23. Of the Rudras I am Sankara, of the Yakshas and Rakshasas I am Kubera. Of the Vasus I am Agni, and of mountains I am Meru.

24. Of the household priests, O Arjuna, know me to be the chief—Brihaspati. Of generals I am Skanda, and of lakes I am the ocean.

25. Of the great Rishis I am Bhrigu, and of words I am the monosyllable 'OM'. Of offerings I am the offering of silent prayer, and of immovable things I am the Himalaya.

26. Of all trees I am Asvattha, and of divine seers I am Narada. Of the Gandharvas I am Chitraratha, of the perfected ones I am Kapila the sage.

27. Of horses know me to be Uchchaisravas born of ambrosia; of lordly elephants I am Airavata, and of men I am the monarch.

28. Of weapons I am the thunderbolt, of cows I am Kamadhuk. Of progenitors I am Kandarpa, and of serpents I am Vasuki.

29. Of the Nagas I am Ananta, of the dwellers in water I am Varuna. Of the Pitris I am Aryaman, and of controllers I am Yama.

30. Of the Daityas I am Prahlada, and of those that measure I am Time. Of beasts I am the lion, and of birds I am Garuda.

31. Of purifiers I am the wind, and of warriors I am Rama. Of fishes I am the shark, and of rivers I am the Ganges.

32. Of created things I am the beginning and the end, and also the middle, O Arjuna. Of sciences I am the science of the Soul; and of reasoners I am the reasoning.

33. Of letters I am the letter A, and of compound words I am the Dvandva. I am myself the never-ending Time, and I am the Dispenser facing all sides.

34. I am Death that destroys all, and I am the origin of things that are yet to be. And of female powers I am fame, fortune,

speech, memory, intelligence, constancy and patience.

35. Of the Saman hymns I am the Brihatsaman, and of metres I am the Gayatri. Of months I am Margasirsha, and of seasons I am the flowery spring.

36. I am the gambling of the fraudulent, and I am the glory of the glorious. I am victory; I am effort; I am the goodness of the good.

37. Of the Yadavas I am Vasudeva, and of the Pandavas I am Arjuna. Of sages I am Vyasa, and of seers I am Usanas the seer.

38. Of those that chastise I am the rod of chastisement, and of those that would conquer I am the policy. Of secret things I am also the silence, and of the wise I am the wisdom.

39. And that which is the germ of all living beings—that am I, O Arjuna. Nor is there anything, whether moving or unmoving, that can exist without me.

40. There is no end to my divine manifestations, O Arjuna. This is only a brief exposition by me of the extent of my grandeur.

41. Whatever being there is, endowed with grandeur, beauty or strength, know that it has sprung only from a spark of my splendour.

42. But what avails thee this detailed knowledge, O Arjuna? I stand pervading the whole universe with a single fragment of myself.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita.....this is the tenth chapter entitled:

#### THE YOGA OF MANIFESTATION

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### CHAPTER XI

*Arjuna said:*

1. The supremely profound discourse concerning the soul which Thou hast delivered of Thy grace to me—by this has my delusion been dispelled.

2. For I have learnt from Thee at length, O Thou of lotus eyes, the origin and the dissolution of beings, and also Thy imperishable greatness.

3. What Thou hast declared Thyself to be, O supreme Lord—it is even so. But



I desire to see Thy divine form, O Supreme Person.

4. If, Lord, Thou thinkest that I am able to behold it, then do Thou, O Lord of Yogins, reveal to me Thy immutable form.

*The Bhagavan said:*

5. Behold my forms, O Arjuna, by hundreds and thousands—manifold and divine and of varied hues and shapes.

6. Behold the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the two Asvins and also the Maruts. Behold, O Arjuna, many marvels never seen before.

7. Behold here today, O Arjuna, the whole universe with the moving and the unmoving, and whatever else thou desirest to see, all concentrated in my person.

8. But thou canst not behold me with this, thine own eye. I will give thee a divine eye, behold now my sovereign power.

*Sanjaya said:*

9. Having spoken thus, O king, Krishna, the great Lord of Yoga, revealed to Arjuna His supreme and divine form:

10. Having many faces and eyes, presenting many a wondrous spectacle,

decked with many divine ornaments and bearing many a heavenly weapon ;

11. Wearing celestial garlands and vestments, anointed with divine perfumes, full of many a marvel, resplendent, boundless, universal.

12. If the light of a thousand suns were to burst forth all at once in the sky, it would be like the splendour of that mighty One.

13. There, in the person of the God of gods, Arjuna beheld the whole universe with its manifold divisions, all gathered together in one.

14. Then struck with amazement, his hair standing on end, Arjuna bowed his head to the Lord, joined his hands in salutation and addressed Him thus :

*Arjuna said :*

15. In Thy body, O God, I see all the gods and all the varied hosts of beings as well—Brahma the Lord on his lotus throne, and all the Rishis and the heavenly Nagas.

16. I behold Thee infinite in form on all sides, with myriad arms and trunks, with myriad faces and eyes. I see no end,

nor middle, nor source to Thee, O Lord of the universe, O Universal Form.

17. I behold Thee glowing as a mass of light everywhere with Thy diadem, mace and disc, dazzling the sight on every side, blazing like the burning fire or the sun, and passing all bounds.

18. Thou art the Imperishable, the Supreme to be realised; thou art the Abode of the universe; Thou art the undying Guardian of the eternal law; I believe that Thou art the Primal Being.

19. I behold Thee as one with no beginning, middle nor end; with infinite arms, and infinite strength; with the sun and the moon as Thine eyes; with Thy face shining as a flaming fire, and with Thy radiance consuming all this universe.

20. For by Thee alone are filled these interspaces of heaven and earth, and all the quarters of the sky. O mighty One, looking at this marvellous and terrible form of Thine, the three worlds are trembling.

21. These hosts of gods enter into Thee, and some in fear extol Thee with folded hands. And bands of great Rishis and Siddhas cry "Hail" and chant Thy praises in hymns of abounding praise.

22. And the Rudras, Adityas, Vasus and Sadhyas; the Visvas, Asvins, Maruts and the Manes; and the hosts of Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras and Siddhas—all behold Thee and are amazed.

23. Looking at Thy great form, O mighty Lord, with myriad mouths and eyes, with myriad arms, thighs and feet, with myriad trunks, and terrible with myriad fangs—the worlds tremble, and so do I.

24. When I see Thee reaching to the skies and brilliant with varied hues, when I see Thee with Thy mouth opened wide and with Thy large eyes glowing bright, my inmost soul trembles in fear, and I find no courage nor peace, O Vishnu.

25. When I behold Thy mouths striking terror by their fangs, like Time's consuming fires, I am all in a whirl and find no peace. Be gracious, O Lord of the gods, Abode of the universe.

26 & 27. All these sons of Dhritarashtra together with the hosts of kings, and also Bhishma, Drona and Karna here, and the leading warriors on our side as well are rushing into Thy fearful mouths set with terrible fangs. Some

are caught between the teeth and their heads are seen crushed to powder.

28. As many torrents of rivers rush towards the sea, so do these heroes of the mortal world rush into Thy flaming mouths.

29. As moths rush swiftly into a blazing fire to perish there, so do these men rush into Thy mouths with tremendous speed to their own destruction.

30. Devouring all the worlds on every side Thou lappest them up with Thy flaming mouths. Thy fiery rays fill the whole universe with their radiance and scorch it, O Vishnu.

31. Tell me who Thou art with form so terrible. I bow to thee, have mercy, O God supreme. I long to know Thee well who art the Primal One, for I do not understand Thy purpose.

*The Bhagavan said:*

32. I am the mighty world-destroying Time, which has begun to slay these men here. Even without thee all the warriors standing arrayed in hostile ranks shall die.

33. Therefore arise and win renown; subdue thy foes and enjoy a prosperous

kingdom. By me they have been slain already. Be thou merely an instrument, O Arjuna.

34. Do thou fearlessly kill Drona and Bhishma, Jayadratha and Karna, and other great warriors as well who have been doomed by me. Fight, and thou shalt conquer thy foes in the battle.

*Sanjaya said:*

35. Having heard these words of Krishna, Arjuna trembled, folded his hands and prostrated himself. Overwhelmed with fear, he then addressed Krishna again with a faltering voice.

*Arjuna said:*

36. Rightly, O Krishna, is the world moved to joy and love by glorifying Thee. The Rakshasas flee on all sides through fear, and hosts of Siddhas all bow down to Thee.

37. And why should they not bow down to Thee, O mighty One, who art greater than all, being the Primal Cause, even of Brahma? O infinite Being, Lord of gods, Abode of the world, Thou art the Imperishable, the Being and the Non-being, and what lies beyond.

38. Thou art the first of gods, the Primal Person; Thou art the supreme Treasure of this world; Thou art the Knower and That which is to be known, and the supreme Abode. And by Thee is this universe pervaded, O Thou of infinite form.

39. Thou are Vayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna and Sasanka. Thou art Prajapati, and also the progenitor of Brahma. Hail, hail to Thee a thousand times! Hail, hail to Thee again, and yet again! "

40. Hail to Thee before, and hail to Thee behind, and hail to Thee on every side, O All. Infinite in power and immeasurable in might Thou dost pervade all, and therefore Thou art All.

41. If, thinking that Thou art my friend and unaware of this Thy greatness, I addressed Thee in ignorance or love as "O Krishna," "O Yadava" or "O Friend"—

42. If in my mirth I showed no reverence to Thee while playing or resting, while sitting or eating, while alone, O eternal Lord, or in the presence of others, I implore Thee, who art infinite, to pardon me.

43. Thou art the Father of the world—of all that move and all that do not move. Thou art the object of its worship and its greatest Teacher. There is no one equal to Thee. How then could there be in the three worlds one greater than Thee, O Thou 'of incomparable power?

44. Therefore I bow down and prostrate myself before Thee, adorable Lord, and seek Thy grace. Bear with me as a father with a son, as a friend with a friend, and as a lover with his beloved.

45. I rejoice that I have seen what was never seen before, but my mind is also distracted with fear. Show me that other form of Thine, and be gracious, O Lord of gods, Abode of the world.

46. I wish to see Thee as before with Thy crown and Thy mace, and with Thy disc in hand. Assume again Thy four-armed shape, O Thou of a thousand arms and of endless shapes.

*The Bhagavan said:*

47. By my grace, through my divine power, O Arjuna, thou hast been shown this supreme form, resplendent, universal, infinite and primal, which none but thee has seen before.



48. Neither by the study of the Vedas and sacrifices, nor by gifts, nor by rituals, nor by severe penances can this form of mine be seen in the world of men by any one else but thee, O Arjuna.

49. Be not afraid, be not bewildered because thou hast beheld this awful form of mine. Free from fear and glad at heart behold again that other form of mine.

*Sanjaya said:*

50. Having thus addressed Arjuna, Krishna showed him again His own form. The mighty One assumed a graceful shape again, and soothed the affrighted Arjuna.

*Arjuna said:*

51. Having seen this Thy graceful human form, O Krishna, I have now become composed in mind, I am restored to my own nature.

*The Bhagavan said:*

52. It is very hard indeed to see this form of mine which thou hast seen. Even the gods are ever eager to see this form.

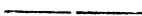
53. Neither by the Vedas, nor by austerity, nor by alms-giving, nor yet by sacrifice can I be seen in the form in which thou hast seen me now.

54. But by devotion to me alone may I thus be known, truly seen, and entered into, O Arjuna.

55. He who does my work and looks upon me as his goal, he who worships me without attachment, and who is without hatred towards any creature—he comes to me, O Arjuna.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita.....this is the eleventh chapter entitled: -

#### THE VISION OF THE COSMIC FORM.



## CHAPTER XII

*Arjuna said:*

1. Those devotees who, ever steadfast, thus worship Thee and those again who worship the Imperishable and the Unmanifested—which of these are better versed in Yoga?

*The Bhagavan said:*

2. Those who have fixed their minds on me, and who, ever steadfast and

possessed of supreme faith, worship me—them do I consider perfect in Yoga.

3. But those who worship the Imperishable, the Ineffable, the Unmanifested, the Omnipresent, the Incomprehensible, the Immutable, the Unchanging and the Eternal—

4. Having subdued all their senses, and being of even mind under all conditions and engaged in the good of all beings—they come to me indeed.

5. The difficulty of those whose minds are set on the Unmanifested is greater, for the goal of the Unmanifested is hard for the embodied to reach.

6. But those who consecrate all their actions to me and regard me as their dearest one, who meditate on me and worship me with single-hearted devotion—

7. I save them full soon, O Arjuna, from death and the ocean of mortal life, their minds being ever set on me.

8. Fix thy mind on me alone, let thy thoughts rest in me. And in me alone wilt thou live hereafter. Of this there is no doubt.

9. If thou art not able to fix thy mind on me, O Arjuna, then seek to reach me by the practice of concentration.

10. If thou art not able even to practise concentration of mind, then devote thyself to my service. For even by doing service to me thou canst reach perfection.

11. If thou art not able to do even this, then give up the fruit of all action, seeking refuge in devotion to me with thy mind subdued.

12. • For knowledge is better than the practice of concentration, and meditation is better than knowledge, and renunciation of the fruit of action is even better than meditation, for close on renunciation follows peace.

13. He who never hates any being and is kindly and compassionate, who is free from the feeling of 'I' and 'Mine', and who looks upon pleasure and pain alike, and has forbearance;

14. He who is ever content and is steady in contemplation, who is self-restrained and is of firm conviction, and who has consecrated his mind and understanding to me—dear to me is the man who is thus devoted.

15. He by whom the world is not harassed and who is not harassed by the world, he who is free from joy and anger, fear and anxiety—he is dear to me.

16. He who has no wants, who is pure and prompt, unconcerned and untroubled, and who is selfless in all his enterprises—dear to me is the man who is thus devoted to me.

17. He who neither joys nor hates, neither grieves nor wants, and who has renounced both good and evil—dear to me is the man who is thus devoted.

18. He who is alike to foe and friend and through good and ill repute, who is alike in cold and heat, and in pleasure and pain, and who is free from attachments—

19. He who is alike in praise and dispraise, who is silent and satisfied with whatever he has, who has no home and is firm of mind—dear to me is the man thus devoted.

20. And they who have faith and follow this righteous way of everlasting life thus set forth, and regard me as supreme—exceedingly dear to me are they who are thus devoted.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita.....this is the twelfth chapter entitled:

THE YOGA OF DEVOTION.

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## CHAPTER XIII

*The Bhagavān said:*

1. This\* body, O Arjuna, is called the Kshetra (lit. field), and the soul that is cognizant of it is called the Kshetra-jna (lit. knower of the field) by those who have knowledge thereof.

2. And know that I am the Kshetra-jna in all the Kshetras, O Arjuna; and only the knowledge of Kshetra and Kshetrajna do I regard as true knowledge.

3. Hear briefly from me what the Kshetra is, and of what nature; what its modifications are, and whence it is, and how it is, and also who the Kshetrajna is and what his powers are.

4. This has been sung by sages in many and different ways, in various

hymns, and also in well-reasoned and conclusive aphorisms about the Absolute.

5. & 6. The main elements, self-consciousness, understanding and the unmanifested; the ten senses, the mind and the five objects of sense; desire, hatred, pleasure and pain; organism, intelligence and the will to hold together—briefly described, this is the Kshetra along with its modifications.

7. Modesty, sincerity, non-violence, forbearance and uprightness; service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness and self-control;

8. Indifference towards the objects of sense; self-effacement, and the perception of the evil of birth, death, old age, sickness and pain;

9. Detachment and freedom from identification with children, wife and home; and constant evenness of mind in the midst of agreeable and disagreeable events;

10. Unswerving devotion to me through constant meditation, resort to solitude, and aversion to society;

11. Steadfastness in the knowledge of the Spirit, and an insight into the

object of the knowledge of Truth—this is declared to be true knowledge, and all that is contrary to it is no knowledge.

12. I will now describe that which ought to be known, and by knowing which immortality is gained. It is GOD the Supreme who is without beginning, and who is said to be neither being nor non-being.

13. His hands and feet are everywhere; His eyes, heads and mouths are facing in all directions. His ears are turned to all sides; and He exists enveloping all.

14. He seems to possess the faculties of all the senses, and yet He is devoid of the senses. He is unattached, and yet He sustains all things. He is free from the dispositions of Nature, and yet He enjoys them.

15. He is without and within all beings. He has no movement, and yet He moves. He is too subtle to be known. He is far away, and yet He is near.

16. He is undivided and yet He is, as it were, divided among beings. He is to be known as the Sustainer of all creation. He devours, and He generates.



17. The Light of all lights, He is said to be above darkness. As knowledge, the object of knowledge and the aim of knowledge, He is set firm in the hearts of all.

18. Thus have been briefly set forth knowledge and the object of knowledge as well as the Kshetra. My devotee who understands this becomes worthy of my state.

19. Know that Nature and Spirit are both without beginning; and know also that all forms and dispositions spring from Nature.

20. Nature is said to be the cause of the formation of the body and its organs; and Spirit is said to be the cause of the experience of pleasure and pain.

21. For Spirit seated in Nature experiences the dispositions of Nature, and it is the attachment to these dispositions that is the cause of its birth in good and evil wombs.

22. The supreme Spirit in the body is said to be the one who witnesses and approves, who supports and enjoys, and who is the sovereign Lord and the highest Self.

23. Whoever knows the Spirit thus, as also Nature along with its dispositions, is never born again, in whatever way he may live.

24. By meditation some perceive the Spirit in themselves through the mind, others by devotion to knowledge, and others by devotion to works.

25. But some who do not know it in this way hear of it from others and worship; and they too pass beyond death by their devotion to what they have heard.

26. Whatever is born—that which moves as well as that which does not move—know, O Arjuna, that it is through the union of the body and the soul.

27. He who sees the Supreme Lord abiding alike in all beings, and never perishing when they perish—verily, he alone sees.

28. For, as he sees the Lord present alike everywhere, he does not injure his true Self by the self, and thus he reaches the supreme state.

29. He who sees that all actions are done only by Nature and that the Self is not the doer—verily he alone sees.

30. When he sees that the manifold nature of beings is centred in the One, and that all evolution is only from there—he becomes one with the Absolute.

31. Having no beginning and possessing no qualities, the supreme and imperishable Spirit, O Arjuna, neither does any work, nor does it receive any stain, even while it remains in the body.

32. Just as ether that pervades all things is too subtle to be stained, even so the soul that is present everywhere suffers no stain in the body.

33. As the one sun illumines the whole world, so does the soul, O Arjuna, illumine all the bodies.

34. Those who perceive by their spiritual insight this distinction between the body and the soul, and the deliverance from Nature, the cause of all beings—they reach the Supreme.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita.....this is the thirteenth chapter entitled:

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE BODY  
AND THE SOUL.

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## CHAPTER XIV

*The Bhagavan said:*

1. Once again I will expound that knowledge, the most exalted of all kinds of knowledge, by gaining which all sages have passed from this world to the highest perfection.

2. Having devoted themselves to this knowledge and having partaken of my nature, they are not born again at the time of creation, nor are they disturbed at the time of dissolution.

3. Great Nature is my womb; in that I place the germ; and from there is the birth of all beings, O Arjuna.

4. From whatever wombs living forms may arise, O Arjuna, great Nature is their womb, and I am the generating Father.

5 “Goodness” “passion” and “dullness”—these dispositions which arise from Nature bind down the immortal soul in the body, O Arjuna.

6. Of these goodness being unsullied is luminous and healthful. It binds, O faultless Arjuna, with the bond of happiness and the bond of knowledge.

7. Know thou that desire is the soul of passion which is the source of thirst and attachment. This binds the soul, O Arjuna, with the bonds of action.

8. Know further that dullness is born of ignorance and that it deludes all creatures. It binds, O Arjuna, with negligence, indolence and sleep.

9. Goodness binds one to happiness; passion binds one to action, O Arjuna; and dullness veiling knowledge binds one to negligence.

10. Goodness prevails when it has overpowered passion and dullness, O Arjuna. Passion prevails when it has overpowered dullness and goodness; and dullness prevails when it has overpowered goodness and passion.

11. When the light of knowledge streams forth from all the gateways of the body, then may it be known that goodness has prevailed.

12. Avarice, activity, enterprise, unrest and desire—these arise, O Arjuna, when passion prevails.

13. Obscurity, stagnation, negligence and delusion—these arise, O Arjuna, when dullness prevails.

14. If the embodied soul meets with death when goodness prevails, it goes to the pure worlds of those who know the Highest.

15. If it meets with death when passion prevails, it is born among those who are attached to works; and if it dies when dullness prevails, it is born in the womb of creatures devoid of reason.

16. The fruit of a good action is said to be good and clean; while the fruit of passion is pain; and the fruit of dullness is ignorance.

17. From goodness springs knowledge, and from passion greed. From dullness spring negligence, delusion and ignorance.

18. Those who are established in goodness rise upwards, those who are moved by passion remain in the middle, and those who are steeped in dullness, being swayed by the tendencies of the lower disposition, go downwards.

19. When a man of insight sees no agent other than these dispositions of Nature, and knows also Him who is beyond these dispositions, he attains to my being.

20. When the embodied soul has risen above these three dispositions of which its body is made up, it gains deliverance from birth, death, old age and pain, and becomes immortal.

*Arjuna said:*

21. What are the marks of the man, O Lord, who has risen above the three dispositions? What is his manner of life? And how does he rise above the dispositions?

*The Bhagavan said:*

22. He who has no aversion to light or activity or even delusion, O Arjuna, when they are present, nor longs for them when they are absent—

23. He who sits like one unconcerned, unmoved by the dispositions, who remains firm and never wavers, knowing it is the dispositions that act—

24. He who dwells in the spirit and is the same in pleasure and pain, who looks upon a clod, a stone and a piece of gold as of equal worth, who remains the same amidst pleasant and unpleasant things, and who, being firm, regards alike both praise and blame—

25. He who is the same in honour and dishonour, and the same to friend and foe, and who has renounced all enterprise—such a man is said to have risen above the dispositions of Nature.

26. And also he who worships me with the Yoga of exclusive devotion—he rises above the dispositions of Nature, and is fit for becoming one with the Absolute.

27. For I am the abode of the Absolute, the Immortal and the Immutable, of Eternal Law and of absolute bliss.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita.....this is the fourteenth chapter entitled:

#### THE DIFFERENTIATION OF THE THREE DISPOSITIONS

### CHAPTER XV

*The Bhagavan said:*

1. The world-tree with its roots above and its branches below is said to be imperishable. Its leaves are the Vedas, and he who knows it knows the Vedas.



2. Its branches extend above and below, and are nourished by the dispositions of Nature. Its twigs are the objects of sense; and its clustering roots spread downwards giving rise to actions in the world of men.

3 & 4. Its form as such is not comprehended here, nor its end, nor its origin, nor its existence. Having cut down this firm-rooted tree with the strong sword of detachment, and saying, "I seek refuge in that Primal Person from whom has come forth this eternal process" one should seek that place from which they who have reached it never return.

5. Those who are free from pride and delusion, and who have conquered the evil of attachment, and who, having abandoned desire, are devoted to the Supreme Spirit and are freed from the pairs of opposites known as pleasure and pain go undeluded to that immutable place.

6. The sun does not illumine it, nor the moon, nor fire. It is my supreme abode, and they who reach it never return.

7. An eternal portion of myself, having become a living soul in the world

of life, draws to itself the mind and the five senses that rest in Nature.

8. When the Lord acquires a body, and when He leaves it, He takes these with Him and goes on His way, as the wind carries away odours from their place.

9. He enjoys the objects of the senses directing the ear, the eye, the touch, the taste and the smell and also the mind.

10. When He departs or stays, when He enjoys or is in contact with the dispositions of Nature, the deluded do not perceive Him, but they who have the eye of wisdom perceive Him.

11. Devout sages ever striving find Him within themselves; but thoughtless men whose souls are undisciplined do not find Him, though they strive.

12. The splendour which is in the sun and which illumines the whole universe, that which is in the moon and which is likewise in the fire—know that it is mine.

13. And entering the earth I sustain all things by my vital force, and becoming the sapful moon I nourish all herbs.

14. Becoming the fire of life I enter into the bodies of all creatures, and mingling with the upward and downward breath, I digest the four kinds of food.

15. And I am seated in the hearts of all; from me are memory and knowledge, and their loss as well. I am indeed He who is to be known by all the Vedas, I am He who made the Vedanta, and I am He who knows the Vedas.

16. There are two beings in this world—the Perishable and the Imperishable. The Perishable is all creatures, and the Imperishable is said to be the unchanging.

17. But there is another Being, the highest, called the Supreme Spirit, who as the eternal Lord pervades and sustains the three worlds.

18. As I surpass the Perishable and as I am higher than even the Imperishable, I am celebrated in the world and in the Veda as the Supreme Being.

19. He who undeluded knows me thus as the Supreme Being—he knows all, O Arjuna, and he worships me with all his heart.

20. Thus has this most secret doctrine been taught by me, O faultless Arjuna. By knowing this a man will become wise and will have fulfilled his duty.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita.....this is the fifteenth chapter entitled:

#### THE SUPREME SPIRIT

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### CHAPTER XVI

*The Bhagavan said:*

1. Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and devotion; almsgiving, self-control and sacrifice, study of the scriptures, austerity and uprightness;

2. Non-violence, truth, freedom from anger; renunciation, tranquillity, aversion to slander; compassion to living beings, freedom from covetousness; gentleness, modesty and steadiness;

3. Courage, patience, fortitude, purity and freedom from malice and over-

weeing conceit—these belong to him who is born to the heritage of the gods, O Arjuna.

4. Hypocrisy, arrogance, and self-conceit; wrath, rudeness and ignorance—these belong, O Arjuna, to him who is born to the heritage of the demons.

5. The heritage of the gods is said to make for deliverance, and that of the demons for bondage. Grieve not, O Arjuna, thou art born to the heritage of the gods.

6. There are two types of beings created in this world—the divine and the diabolic. The divine have been described at length. Hear now from me, O Arjuna, of the diabolic.

7. Men of diabolical nature know neither right action nor right abstention. Nor is purity found in them, nor good conduct, nor truth.

8. They say, “The world is false, without a moral basis, and without a God. What is there that does not spring from mutual union? Lust is the cause of all.”

9. Holding this view, these lost souls of small understanding who commit

cruel deeds come forth as enemies for the destruction of the world.

10. Giving themselves up to insatiable desires, full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance, they hold false views through delusion and act with impure resolves.

11. Obsessed by innumerable cares which would end only with their death, and looking upon the gratification of desires as their highest aim, and convinced that this is all;

12. Bound by a hundred ties of desire, given up wholly to lust and anger, they strive to gain heaps of wealth by unjust means for the gratification of their passions.

13. "This I have gained today: and that longing will I fulfil. This wealth is mine, and that also shall be mine hereafter.

14. "This foe I have slain, and others too I will slay. I am the lord of all, and I enjoy myself. I am prosperous, mighty and happy.

15. "I am rich and of high birth. Who is there like unto me? I will perform sacrifices, I will give alms, I will rejoice." Thus are they deluded by ignorance.

16. Bewildered by numerous thoughts, enveloped in the meshes of delusion and addicted to the gratification of their desires, they fall into loathsome hell.

17. Self-conceited, stubborn, filled with the haughtiness and intoxication of wealth, they ostentatiously perform sacrifices which are so only in name with utter disregard of rules.

18. Possessed of self-conceit, power and pride, and also of lust and wrath, these traducers hate me in the bodies of others and in their own.

19. These cruel haters, the vilest of men, these sinners I always hurl down into the wombs of the demons in the cycle of births and deaths.

20. Having fallen into the wombs of the demons and being deluded from birth to birth, they never attain to me, O Arjuna, but go further down to the lowest state.

21. Three are the gateways of this hell leading to the ruin of the soul—lust, wrath and greed. Therefore let man renounce these three.

22. The man who has escaped these three gates of darkness, O Arjuna, works

out his own good and reaches the highest state.

23. But he who discards the scriptural law and acts as his desires prompt him—he attains neither perfection, nor happiness, nor the highest state.

24. Therefore let the scripture be thy authority in determining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. Knowing the scriptural law thou shouldst do thy work in this world.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita.....this is the sixteenth chapter entitled:

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE HERITAGE  
OF THE GODS AND OF THE DEMONS.

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## CHAPTER XVII

*Arjuna said:*

1. Those who leave aside the ordinances of scriptures, but offer sacrifice with faith—what is their state, O Krishna? Is it one of 'goodness or of 'passion' or 'dullness'?



*The Bhagavan said:*

2. The faith of men is of three kinds. It is in accordance with their disposition—‘good’ or ‘passionate’ or ‘dull’. Hear now about it.

3. The faith of every man, O Arjuna, is in accordance with his natural disposition. Man is of the nature of his faith; what his faith is, that verily he is.

4. Men in whom ‘goodness’ prevails worship the gods; men in whom ‘passion’ prevails worship the demigods and demons; and the others in whom ‘dullness’ prevails worship the spirits and ghosts.

5. Vain and conceited men, impelled by the force of their desires and passions, subject themselves to terrible mortifications not ordained by scriptures.

6. And, being foolish, they torture their bodily organs and me also who dwell within the body. Know that such men are fiendish in their resolves.

7. Even the food which is dear to each of them is of three kinds. So are the sacrifices, austerities and gifts. Hear now of their distinction.

8. Foods that promote length of life, vitality, strength, health, happiness and

cheerfulness, and those that are sweet, soft, nourishing and agreeable are the favourites of the 'good.'

9. Foods that are bitter, sour, salted, over-hot, pungent, dry and burning, and those that produce pain, grief and disease are liked by the 'passionate.'

10. And that which is not freshly cooked, which is tasteless, putrid and stale, which is of the leavings and is unclean, is the food dear to the 'dull.'

11. That sacrifice which is offered according to the scriptural law by those who expect no reward and who firmly believe it is their duty to sacrifice—that is of a 'good' disposition.

12. But that sacrifice which is offered in expectation of reward and for the sake of ostentation—know, O Arjuna, that it is of a 'passionate' disposition.

13. And the sacrifice which is contrary to the law and in which no food is distributed, no hymns are chanted and no fees are paid and which is devoid of faith is said to be of a 'dull' disposition.

14. The worship of the gods, of the twice-born, of teachers and of the wise; purity, uprightness, abstinence and non-

violence—these are said to be the penance of the body.

15. The utterance of words which do not give offence and which are truthful, pleasant and beneficial, and the regular recitation of the Veda—these are said to be the penance of speech.

16. Serenity of mind, beneficence, silence, self-control and purity of heart—these are said to be the penance of the mind.

17. This three-fold penance<sup>1</sup> practised with perfect faith by men of balanced minds without desire for gain is said to be of a ‘good’ disposition.

18. The penance which is done in order to gain respect, honour and reverence and for ostentation is said to be of a ‘passionate’ disposition. It is unsteady and uncertain.

19. The penance which is done with a foolish obstinacy by means of self-torture or for causing injury to others is declared to be of a ‘dull’ disposition.

20. That gift which is made to one that can make no return, and with the feeling that it is one’s duty to give, and which is given in proper place and time

and to a worthy person—it is accounted ‘good.’

21. But that which is given for the sake of recompense or with the expectation of future gain or in a grudging mood is accounted ‘passionate’.

22. And the gift which is made unceremoniously and contemptuously, at an improper place and time, and to unworthy persons is declared to be ‘dull.’

23. “Om Tat Sat”—this is the three-fold symbol of the Absolute. By means of this were ordained of old the Brahmanas, the Vedas and the Sacrifices.

24. Therefore with the utterance of the word “Om” are the acts of sacrifice, gifts and penance, enjoined by the scriptural rule, always begun by the expounders of the Veda.

25. And with the utterance of the word “Tat” various acts of sacrifice, penance and gifts are performed regardless of recompense by those who seek salvation.

26. The word “Sat” is used in the sense of reality and of goodness; and likewise, O Arjuna, the term “Sat” is used for any action worthy of praise.

27. Steadfastness in sacrifice, penance and gifts is also called "Sat"; and so also any action connected with them is termed "Sat".

28. Whatever offering or gift is made, whatever austerity is practised, whatever rite is performed—if it is done without faith, it is called "Asat", O Arjuna. It is of no account here or hereafter.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita.....this is the seventeenth chapter entitled:

#### THE THREE-FOLD DIVISION OF FAITH

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### CHAPTER XVIII

*Arjuna said:*

1. I desire to know the true nature of renunciation, and again of resignation, O mighty-armed Krishna, slayer of Keshin.

*The Bhagavan said:*

2. The relinquishing of all works that are prompted by desire is understood by the sages to be renunciation; while the surrendering of the fruits of all works is called resignation by the wise.

3. Some sages declare that all works should be abandoned as evil. Others say that works of sacrifice, gifts and penance should not be given up.

4. Hear now from me, O Arjuna, the truth about resignation, for resignation is declared to be of three kinds, O best of men.

5. Works of sacrifice, gifts and penance should not be given up, but should be performed. For sacrifice, gifts and penance purify the wise.

6. Even these works should, however, be done with surrender of attachment and of fruits. This, O Arjuna, is my decided and final view.

7. But renunciation of any duty that ought to be done is not right. The abandonment of it through ignorance is declared to be of the nature of 'dullness'.

8. He who renounces a duty from fear of physical suffering, because it is painful, does so only through his 'passionate' disposition, and can never gain the object of renunciation.

9. But he who performs a prescribed duty as something that ought to be done, but renounces all attachment and also the

fruit—his renunciation, O Arjuna, is regarded as one of 'goodness'.

10. The wise man of renunciation, who is imbued with goodness and whose doubts are dispelled, never hates a duty that is unpleasant, nor feels any attachment to a duty that is pleasant.

11. It is indeed impossible for any embodied being to abstain from work absolutely. But he who gives up the fruit of work is regarded as one who has renounced.

12. Pleasant, unpleasant and mixed—three-fold is the fruit of work, after their passing away, to those who have not renounced. But none whatever to those who have renounced.

13. Learn from me, O mighty Arjuna, these five causes of the performance of every act, as mentioned in the philosophy of knowledge.

14. The seat of action, and likewise the agent; the various instruments and the diverse kinds of functions—the presiding deity being the fifth.

15. Whatever action a man performs by his body, speech or mind, whether it is right or wrong—these five are its causes.

16. That being so, the man of perverse mind who on account of his imperfect understanding looks upon the self as the sole agent—he does not see at all.

17. He who is free from the notion of 'I', and whose understanding is unsullied—though he slays these men, he slays not, nor is he bound.

18. Knowledge, the object of knowledge and the knowing subject—these three form the three-fold incitement to action; and the instrument, the purpose and the agent—these form the three constituents of action.

19. Knowledge, action and agent—in the Science of Dispositions each of these is said to be of three different kinds according to the different dispositions. Hear of them also as they are.

20. The knowledge by which one imperishable essence is seen in all beings, undivided in the divided—know that that knowledge is of 'goodness'.

21. The knowledge which, by reason of their separateness, sees in all beings different entities of various kinds—know that that knowledge is of the nature of 'passion'.



22. While that which clings to each single object, as if it were the whole, and which is irrational, untrue and narrow—that is declared to be of the nature of ‘dullness.’

23. An action which is obligatory and which is done without love or hate and without attachment by one who desires no fruit—it is said to be of ‘goodness’.

24. But that action which is done with a great strain by one who seeks to gratify his desires or by one who is prompted by a feeling of “I”—it is pronounced to be one of ‘passion.’

25. While the action which is undertaken through ignorance, without regard to consequences, or to loss and injury, and without regard to one’s capacity—it is said to be one of ‘dullness’.

26. The doer who is free from attachment, and who has no feeling of “I”, who is endowed with steadiness and zeal, and who is unmoved by success or failure—he is said to be of a ‘good’ disposition.

27. The doer who is swayed by passion, and who seeks the fruit of his

works, who is greedy, harmful and impure, and who is moved by joy and sorrow—he is declared to be of a ‘passionate’ disposition.

28. While the doer who is unsteady, vulgar, obstinate, deceitful, malicious, indolent, despondent and procrastinating—he is said to be of a ‘dull’ disposition.

29. Of understanding and steadiness hear now the threefold distinction, O Arjuna, according to the dispositions of Nature. It will be explained in full, and each of them separately.

30. The understanding which distinguishes between right action and right abstention, between what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, between what should cause fear and what should not cause fear, and between bondage and liberation—that, O Arjuna, is of the nature of ‘goodness’.

31. The understanding which fails to distinguish correctly between right and wrong, between what ought to be done and what ought not to be done—that, O Arjuna, is of the nature of ‘passion.’

32. While that understanding which, being enveloped in darkness, regards wrong as right, and which reverses all

values—that, O Arjuna, is of the nature of ‘dullness’.

33. The steadiness which never fails in concentration, and by which one controls the activities of the mind, the life-breaths, and the senses—that, O Arjuna, is of the nature of ‘goodness.’

34. The steadiness by which one holds fast to duty, pleasure and wealth, desiring the fruit of each through intense attachment—that, O Arjuna, is of the nature of ‘passion.’

35. While the steadiness by which a fool does not leave his torpor, fear, grief, despondency and sensuality—that, O Arjuna, is of the nature of ‘dullness.’

36 & 37. And now hear from me, O Arjuna, the three kinds of pleasure. That in which a man comes to rejoice by long practice and in which he reaches the end of his pain, and that which is like poison at first but like nectar at the end—such pleasure is said to be ‘good.’ It springs from a clear knowledge of the soul.

38. That which springs from the contact of the senses and their objects, and which is like nectar at first but like poison at the end—such pleasure is said to be ‘passionate.’

39. But that which deludes the soul both in the beginning and even after the end, and which springs from sleep, sloth and error—that pleasure is said to be ‘dull.’

40. There is no creature here on earth, nor again among the gods in heaven, which is free from these three dispositions of Nature.

41. The duties of Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas, and also of Sudras have been divided, O Arjuna, in accordance with their natural dispositions.

42. Serenity, self-control, austerity, purity, forbearance and uprightness, as also knowledge, insight and faith—these are the duties of a Brahman springing from his own nature.

43. Heroism, vigour, firmness, resourcefulness, dauntlessness in battle, generosity and majesty—these are the duties of a Kshatriya springing from his own nature.

44. Ploughing, tending cattle, and trade are the duties of a Vaisya springing from his nature. And the duty of a Sudra springing from his nature is essentially one of service.

45. Man reaches perfection by devotion to his own duty. Hear now how perfection is attained by him who is devoted to his own duty.

46. He from whom all beings proceed and by whom all this is pervaded—by worshipping Him through the performance of his own duty does man attain perfection.

47. Better is one's own duty, though imperfectly done, than the duty of another well done. He who does the duty imposed on him by his own nature incurs no sin.

48. One ought not to give up the work which is suited to one's own nature, O Arjuna, though it has its imperfections; for every enterprise is beset with imperfections, as fire with smoke.

49. He whose mind is unattached everywhere, who is self-subdued, and from whom desire has fled—he attains by renunciation to the supreme state transcending all work.

50. Learn from me in brief, O Arjuna, how one who has attained to perfection reaches God—which is the supreme consummation of knowledge.

51. Endowed with a clear vision, firmly restraining himself, turning away from sound and other objects of sense, and casting aside likes and dislikes;

52. Dwelling in solitude, eating but little, restraining his speech, body and mind, and ever engaged in meditation and concentration; and cultivating freedom from passion;

53. And casting aside conceit, violence, pride, desire, wrath and possession; selfless and tranquil in mind—he becomes worthy of becoming one with God.

54. Having become one with God, and being tranquil in spirit he neither grieves nor desires. He regards all beings as alike and will have supreme devotion to me.

55. By that devotion he knows me, knows what in truth I am and who I am. Then, having known me in truth, he forthwith enters into me.

56. Though he may be constantly engaged in all kinds of work, yet, having found refuge in me, he reaches by my grace the eternal and indestructible abode.

57. Surrendering in mind all actions to me, regarding me as the Supreme and taking refuge in steadfastness of mind, do thou fix thy thought constantly on me.

58. Fixing thy thought on me, thou shalt surmount every difficulty by my grace; but if from self-conceit thou wilt not listen to me, thou shalt utterly perish.

59. If indulging in self-conceit thou thinkest, "I will not fight," vain is thy resolution. Nature will compel thee.

60. Fettered by thine own tendencies, O Arjuna, which are born of thy nature, that which through delusion thou seekest not to do thou shalt do even against thy will.

61. The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing them to revolve by his mysterious power, as if they were mounted on a machine.

62. Fly to Him alone for shelter with all thy soul, O Arjuna. By His grace shalt thou gain supreme peace and the everlasting abode.

63. Thus has wisdom, more secret than all secrets, been declared to thee by me. Consider it fully and act as thou wilt.

64. Listen again to my supreme word, the most secret of all. Thou art well beloved of me, therefore will I tell thee what is good for thee.

65. Fix the mind on me, be devoted to me, sacrifice to me, prostrate thyself before me, so shalt thou come to me. I promise thee truly, for thou art dear to me.

66. Surrendering all duties come to me alone for shelter. Do not grieve, for I will release thee from all sins.

67. Never should this be told by thee to one who is not austere in life or who has no devotion in him, nor to one who does not wish to hear, nor to one who traduces me.

68. He who teaches this supreme secret to those who worship me shall doubtless come to me, for he has shown the highest devotion to me.

69. Nor is there anyone among men who can do anything more pleasing to me than he; nor shall anyone on earth be dearer to me than he.

70. And he who will study this sacred dialogue of ours—by him shall I regard myself as having been worshipped through knowledge as a sacrifice.



71. And even the man who listens to it with faith and without scoffing shall obtain liberation, and he<sup>4</sup> shall gain the happy regions of the right<sup>5</sup>eous.

72. Has this been heard by thee, O Arjuna, with undivided attention? Has thy delusion, born of ignorance, been dispelled?

*Arjuna said:*

73. My delusion is gone. I have come to myself by Thy grace, O Krishna. I stand free from doubt. I will act according to Thy word.

*Sanjaya said:*

74. Thus have I heard this wonderful dialogue between Krishna and the high-souled Arjuna which made my hair stand on end.

75. By the favour of Vyasa I heard this supreme secret, this Yoga taught by Krishna himself, the Lord of Yoga, in person.

76. As often as I remember, O King, this wonderful and sacred dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, I rejoice again and again.

77. And as often as I remember that most marvellous form of Krishna, great is

my astonishment, O King, and I rejoice again and again.

78. Wherever there is Krishna the Lord of Yoga, and Arjuna the archer, there will surely be fortune, victory, prosperity and righteousness. Such is my belief.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Absolute, the scripture of Yoga, and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna this is the eighteenth chapter entitled:

THE YOGA OF RENUNCIATION AND RELEASE.





